

MUMBLES



Collected Anthology, Volume Three 1985 -1989

John Eberly





MUMBLES COMIX

COLLECTED ANTHOLOGY

Volume Three

1985 - 1989

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SOMETHING FOR THE KIDS

Julien
Hoge

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE LIVED THREE BEARS. DELBERT BEAR, HIS WIFE NANCY, AND THEIR YOUNG SON BUD SHARED A SEVEN ROOM HOME IN THE SUBURBS OF FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA.



ONE NIGHT THEY WERE WATCHING HOLLYWOOD SQUARES ON THEIR COLOR TV.

THE COLOR'S NOT RIGHT - IT'S TOO GREEN!

NO - IT'S TOO BLUE!

NO - IT'S TOO RED AND I WANT TO WATCH THE NEWS ANYWAY.



THEY WENT TO THE HOUSE OF PANCAKES EVERY SUNDAY MORNING FOR BREAKFAST BUT THERE WAS ALWAYS SOMETHING WRONG.

MY COFFEE'S TOO BLACK!

MY BACONS TOO CRISP!

MY TOAST IS TOO BUTTERY, AND I WANNA MUFFIN ANYWAY!



THERE EVEN WERE COMPLAINTS ON CHRISTMAS MORNING AT THE BEAR HOUSE...

THIS PIPE IS TOO UGLY!

THIS PERFUME IS TOO STINKY!

THIS BIKE IS TOO STUPID LOOKING, AND I WANTED A PONY ANYWAY!



AND THEN ONE NIGHT THE BEAR FAMILY CAR RAN OFF THE HIGHWAY AND CRASHED DOWN AN ENBANKMENT. ALL THREE BEARS WERE KILLED. THE NEWSPAPER HEADLINE SAID: BEAR FAMILY WIPED OUT - TOO BAD!



JOE SCHWIND

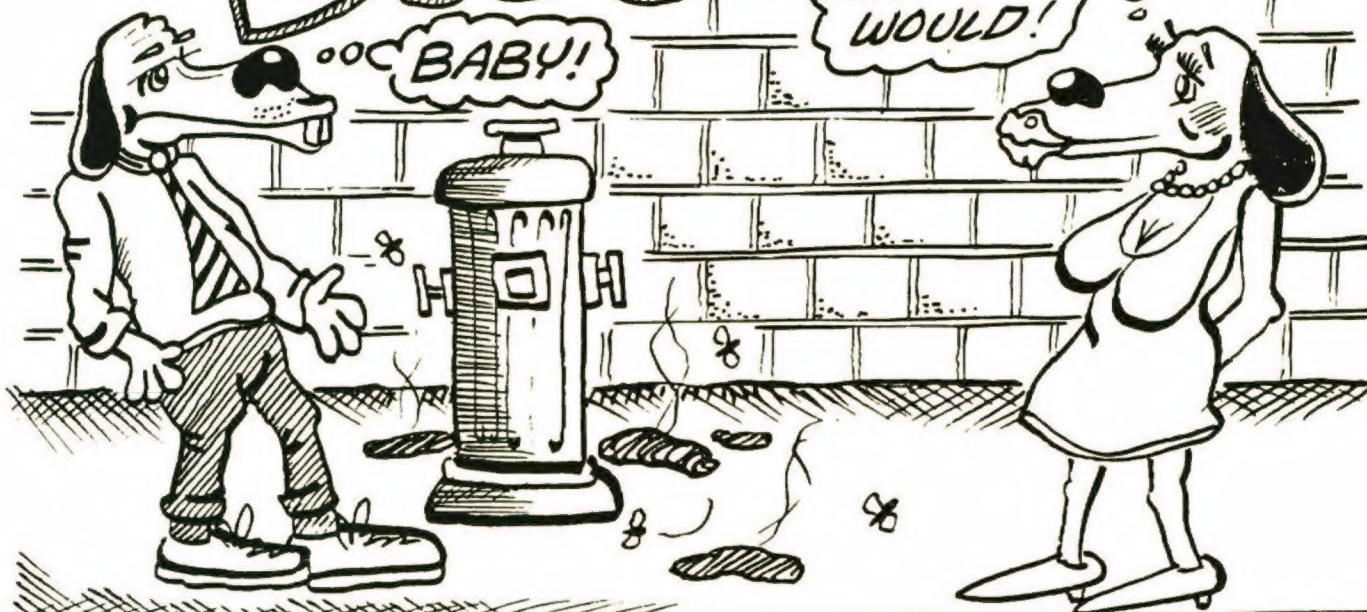
FOR
MUMBLES...

BY Kevin Collier

DOG'S DAY

IT IS HIM.
HE CAME BACK
TO OUR SPOT
JUST LIKE HE
SAID HE
WOULD!

BABY!



THEY KISS, AFTER YEARS
OF NOT SEEING EACH
OTHER...

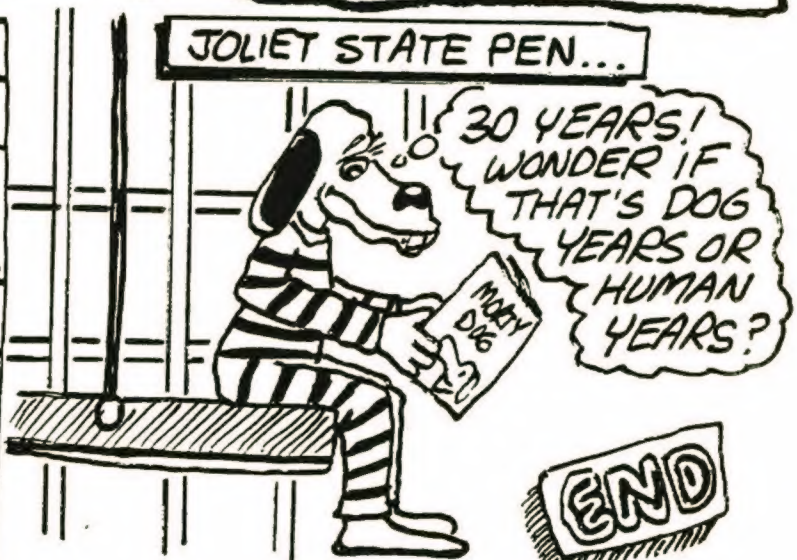
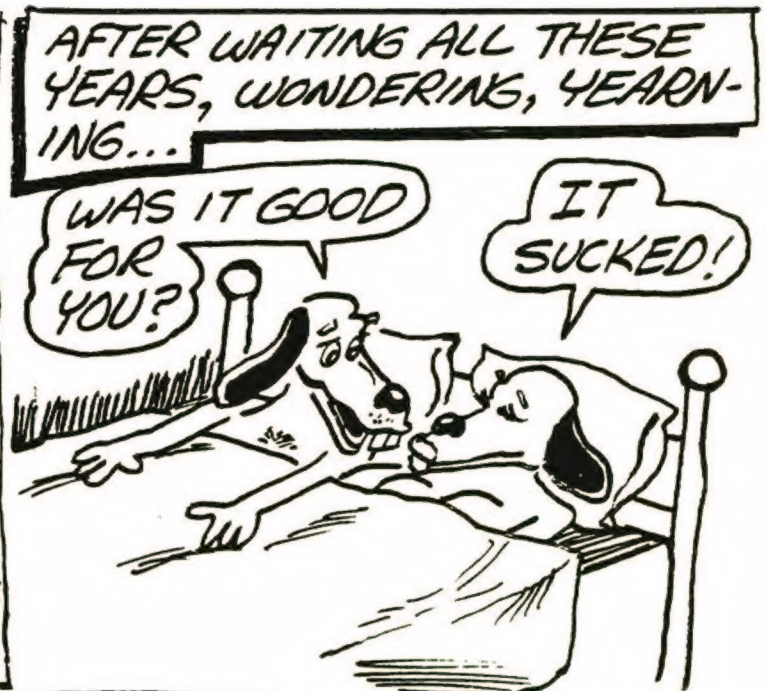
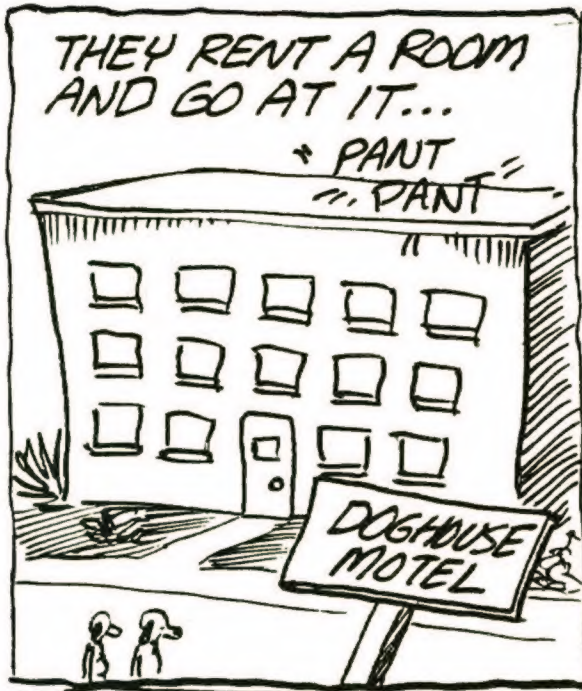


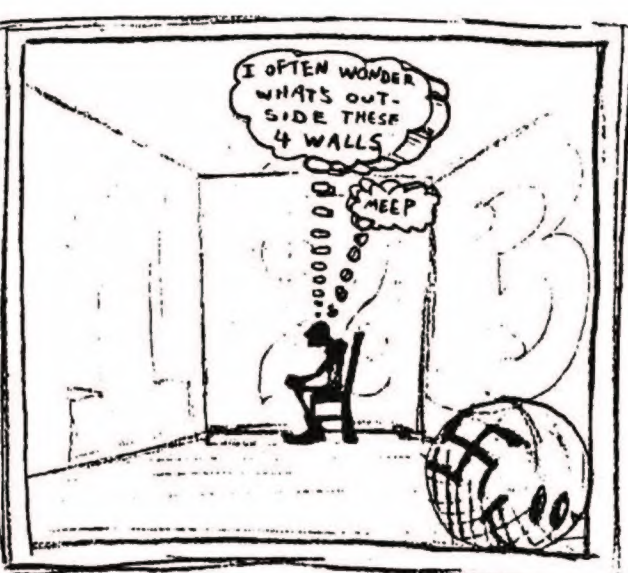
... BOTH MARRIED OTHER
DOGS BY MISTAKE, AND
REGRET IT. BUT NOW
THE AFFAIR BEGINS...
AT LAST.

DAISY GOES INTO HEAT....

DAISY!
BE QUIET!
OTHER
DOGS ARE
LOOKING!







SCHOOL NURSE ^{by John E}

ALRIGHT
KIDS!
LINE UP FOR
YOUR SHOTS!

ONE FOR
YOU...



ONE FOR ME!



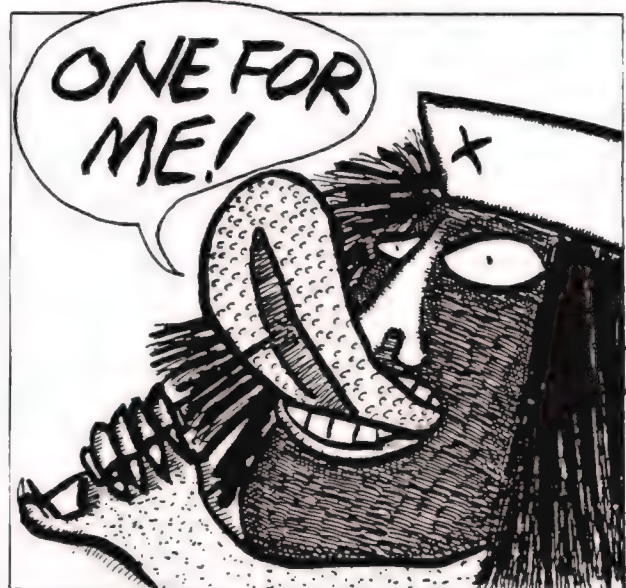
ONE
FOR
YOU...



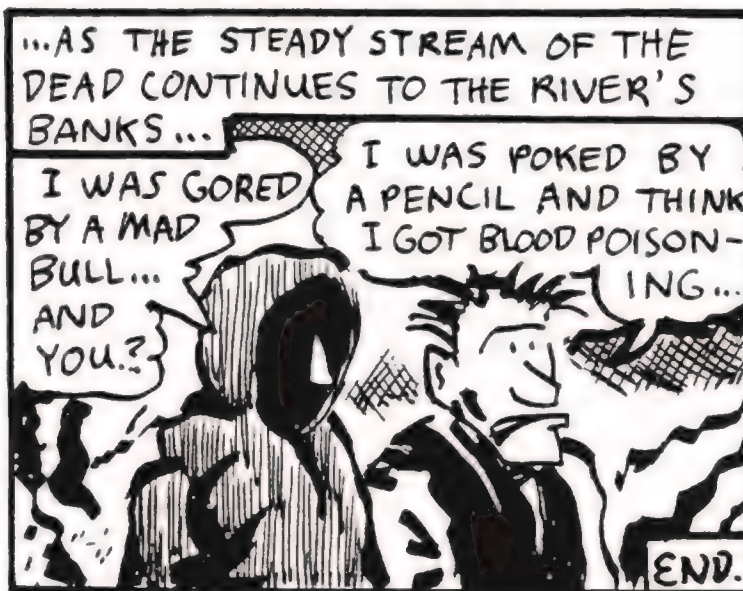
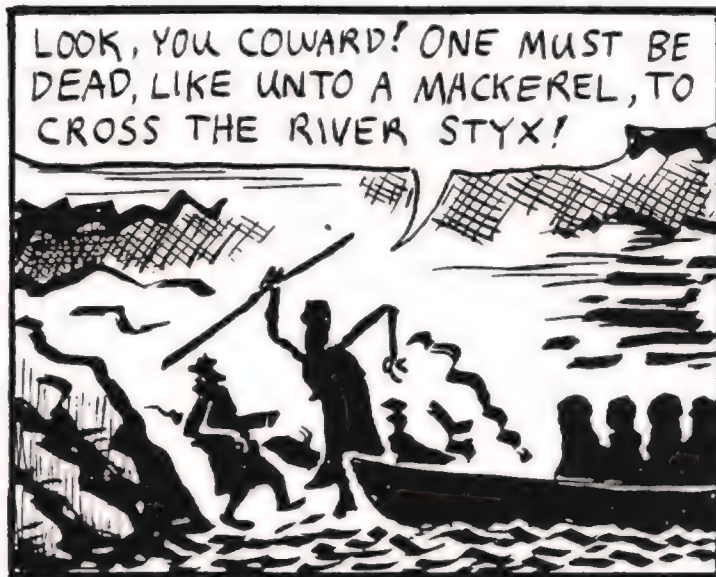
ONE
FOR
ME!











JIM RYAN

JOHN E INTERVIEWS
THE CONTROVERSIAL
ARTIST-CARTOONIST
FOR OUR MUMBLES
READERS...

Hi Jim, welcome to the MUMBLES interview section. I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself and your art...please indulge me for a few...

MUMBLES: About how long have you been involved in comix and comix publishing?

I have been drawing since the age of three or four, and my work today is the result of lifelong preoccupations. All the art I have done since high school has been very similar to what I do in comix or with the Surrealists.

Unfortunately for me, I worked in total isolation up until 1967. I had no idea that work like mine was published anywhere or that there was any sort of audience for it. Then a friend of mine who had gone to the Midwest told me that the drawings I was doing at that time resembled work done by S. Clay Wilson, whom he had met in his travels. I remembered the name, but I never saw any comix until 1969. And the ones I saw contained work by Wilson. Immediately, I began to think of my drawings as comix. I did not try to copy Wilson or the other great artists, but I did see the little points of resemblance between my drawings and theirs, and I began to try to strengthen those good points in my drawings.

At the same time, I also noticed points of similarity between my work and historical works of Surrealism. This was as important to me, perhaps more so, than my comix inclinations.

The only satisfactory direction was to let my work take its own course, hoping the two distinct sensibilities would not hamper one another. I did not try to become a Surrealist comix artist, I never forced it to happen, and I would resist being referred to that way. But some people have described me that way, *faut de mieux*.

It still had not occurred to me that my work could be published as late as 1973. The first few issues of COMIX WORLD revealed to me that comix were not the exclusive domain of masters like the ZAP artists and that new artists were being published all the time. I spent the next year drawing a full length comix, but by then it was 1974, a notoriously bad year for comix publishers. I never even submitted that work for publication, and for the next five years I did no sustained comix work.

About 1980, Clay Geerdes began to take a strong position in favor of self-publishing in COMIX WORLD. He was willing to be the nucleus for a group of people who wanted to try it. Suddenly, it made sense to publish one's own work, because here was a guy who cared, who would help out a little, and whose publication would confer a certain legitimacy on self-published comix. Clay is an important figure in the history of comix. He deserves a lot of credit for helping artists and for clarifying and concretizing the idea of comix.

So finally I began to publish, but you can see that it is a long story.



DOPPELGÄNGER ©1981-J. RYAN

MUMBLES: In what ways has the self-publishing scene changed in the years you've been active?

Here is a chance to correct a misconception at the same time we work with this question. Many of us, including you, have long since ceased to be the sole publishers of our own work, but we still refer to our comix as self-published, even when it is not appropriate. We should avoid selling ourselves short that way. That is one of the principal changes in our activity: it is no longer merely self-publishing. Most of the artists know one another and print each other's work in their comix these days. There is an informal but substantial network of communication among the artists which makes such exchanges possible, and the creation of that network is another significant change.

Many of the artists have been published in full-size formats by now, including appearances in slick underground comix. Established older UG artists have appeared in our books or have published small comix of their own. There is a seepage of our work outward into other media like newspapers and mail art, as well as upward into more advanced comix venues.

These changes occur slowly. I do not perceive a ground swell of small press activity yet, not quite the revolution that some people anticipated. I saw some marvelous, vivid, totemic portraits of women at a college faculty art show recently- they would have been perfect comix material. But the woman who drew them had priced them at \$150 each. Right away I disabused myself of the notion to ask her if I could print one. She'd have to devalue the pictures from \$150 to 1.5¢ and she would never do that. There was an artist who should be publishing. The point of the story is that for every one of us who publishes, there are dozens of wonderful artists who could be doing comix or other self-published art, but it is not happening on the scale some people predicted. Comix are still largely ignored by people in the fine arts.

The small comix used to be gratuitously sexual, with a surfeit of immature, masturbatory work that was too weak to be erotic or even pornographic. Now there are a lot of gratuitously violent, post-Punk/primitive comix based on some spineless nihilism. There you go, there's some real progress for you. Bruce Sweeney and I have discussed how little fire and commitment, how little awareness and social responsibility are evident in comix today. We have this great instrument in our hands, a gift of history, the technology to print anything we want to print. The gift is being squandered. Let me advocate a change. I challenge the small press to become aware of itself as a social instrument. Let us have fun, but let us also remember we can speak up and encourage changes in our world.

MUMBLES: You seem to have an extremely open mind about content in comix. How do you view the "arting" vs. "gags" cartooning controversy?

Comix should be whatever the artist is skilled enough to pull off. Clay said "Anything can be a comic book". One of R. Crumb's characters said "If you don't like it, draw your own comic book". I do not see why there should be any controversy. If the artist does whatever he does best, he can hold his head up. If people do not like it, they do not have to read it. No one reads my comix, and I keep doing them. That's life. Where is the controversy? Comix artists comprise a huge pool of vital talent which lies in terra incognita. The reason that most of them are unknown is that they draw what they have to draw rather than what they ought to draw.

The only controversy that interests me arose when some observers attempted to separate the small press comix from the underground comix, or called them fanzines. That effort was a specious generalization.

The self-published comix are part of the alternative press continuum which includes the commercial UGs. The undergrounds were neither the first alternative comix nor the last. It isn't like Robert Crumb sat down and invented comix. Everyone knows that the Tijuana Bibles preceded comix. What is not well understood is that, once mimeograph machines were common in factories and offices, all kinds of crude little comix were drawn, printed and circulated by workers. They were scurrilous little things with offensive sexual or racial humor, and I do not believe that they ever have been studied.

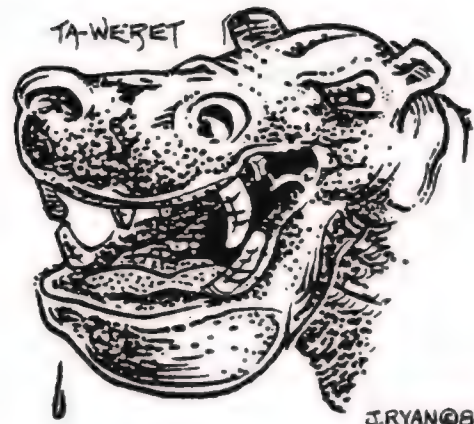
My point is that the slick UGs were only the first comix to be called "underground". Again, many of the early full-sized comix were self-published, comix like ARMADILLOTOONS #1 and NEW LEGENDS. The mini-comix and other small press formats are part of that evolution, and are far more obscure or "underground" than any of the classics like BJOJOU ever were. There is a history of personal, eccentric, non-commercial, alternative, autonomous, short-run, outrageous, uncensored, riotous publishing in our country. That is freedom of the press. We should uphold that tradition and ignore or abandon controversies which arise when we stupidly try to measure our publications against mass-produced commercial products. Ask Bob X if it ain't so.

MUMBLES: How do you feel about the term "newave" that's been used to describe the new wave of underground comics and artists?

I do not like the term newave, partly because it encourages fallacious attempts to separate a very unstructured phenomenon into parts, as I just pointed out. No offense to Clay or anyone else who prefers to use the word. It was useful as a rallying cry at first, but now it has no meaning that I can see. It has, if anything, become a pejorative usage- many people associate it with crude art or punk rock without troubling themselves to read any of the comix.

Furthermore, people on both sides of the fence have used the word newave to designate any small self-published comix. This means that a high school kid who decides during his summer vacation that he wants to be a cartoonist can mash out a primitive little minicomix in an hour and print 50 copies and he is a newave. The kid forgets all about comix within two weeks, but because he did that little book, he is a newave just like Larry Weir, Mike Roden and George Erling. Those men have spent years, lifetimes, perfecting their art. Why subject them to this newave stigma simply because they came along a little too late to make it into the closed-shop slick UGs? Many artists have told me that they want no part of that word, and some pretty good artists have gotten out of small press to avoid being associated with negative stereotypes. Let's eschew the word newave, and instead think of the entire continuum of alternative comix as an ongoing phenomenon which can not be divided into components. There is too little structure and too much overlap in comix evolution for that attempt at categorization to succeed. Comix exist to defy categories.

One more point I'd like to make. You know damn well that if that kid with his minicomix asks me to do a page for him, I always do. I support and encourage him. However, I draw the line at putting him in the same category as Steve Lafler for the ridiculous reason that they both publish their own work. By the way, the above reference to punk rock was not meant to be disparaging.



MUMBLES: Who do you think is the most enigmatic artist in comix? Why? Do you have any favorites?

Enigma is absent from comix today. The few slick UGs we see are fairly formulaic. The small press formats do not encourage extended works, so it is not usual to find anything there with sufficient development to establish challenging ideas or a palpable sense of wonder. Steve Willis does long pieces, but he isn't enigmatic: he has such clarity that the enigma isn't in his work, but in the eyes of folks without his vision. The Surrealist cartoonist Hal Rammel is enigmatic, perhaps, and maybe Jim Woodring is also. I am referring to a sense of wonder in their work. Enigma is not the same as obfuscation or obscurantism, which we encounter in many comix, some of which are critical and popular favorites.

I admire far too many artists to make a list of names. It would get so long that I would have to omit some I really dig, and those would be just the guys who read this. My opinion isn't worth anything outside of the small press circle, and within that circle, everyone already knows whom I admire, so let us avoid some haphazardous, impromptu rostering which is bound to be incomplete. What if I forgot to put down Jim Sierzey? Don't let me forget that- he puts me down often enough.

MUMBLES: You do some of the most cerebral work in comix. Do you take life and art seriously?

My work is not always cerebral, but the reaction of readers is likely to be thoughtful, which is what I want. I take life seriously, although I do not believe that life is serious. This explains the tension in my work. Art is good, so we have to work hard at it to uphold it. But we should not always be so serious about it. The universe is irrational, if not crazy, and we humiliate ourselves if we try to be too serious. We Americans badly need to remember this.

MUMBLES: The piece you did for MUMBLES #3, "Nightmares of Thomas Equinass", was beautiful. You combined drawing with collage. Does this method prove to be time consuming? How long does it take you to produce a piece like this one?

I'm glad you asked that question. Lots of jerks think collage is some artistic swindle. A good collage- a totally fresh picture assembled from found images so that something new is created- is a valid work of art. Sometimes we arrange molecules of ink or paint to make a picture, sometimes we rearrange other pictures. To produce collage honorably, without stealing imagery wholesale, takes at least as long as drawing. I spend hours looking through various sources, waiting to be astonished by some component that is perfect for the next addition to a collage. It is not under my control like a drawing is; I usually have to wait for it to present itself to me. Getting shading to match up all through a collage piece is hard work. Your MUMBLES #3 piece took only two evenings, but that was because it was an easy piece. I drew most of it and only had to do a little collage work, very simple collage. Many people are using collage in comix now, but only about three of them have any right to do it.

MUMBLES: What kind of books do you read? What kind of films do you prefer?

Access to books is now unparalleled in history. Only a sap or a doctor reads narrowly. I try to investigate many different fields, hoping to avoid becoming a zombie brainwash mass culture statistic, but it probably won't work. Phenomenology, existentialism, Surrealism, Taoism, modern poetry, science fiction, wine, novels, science essays, literate mysteries, Zen, comix, music history and criticism, and literate diaries all interest me deeply. I try to keep an eye on the underground, avant-garde and so-called little magazines. Once in awhile I get time to study chess or a little Spanish.

Film has little impact on my work. I never understood why people who love comic art become ecstatic over movie parodies or "cinematic" cartooning sequences. Why should cartoonists imitate film? Isn't the medium strong enough to stand alone? Only a few films interest me. I live in an area where access to significant films is very limited, and as for more commercial films, there is no way I am going to kill an entire evening driving out into the urban blight to a shopping mall, where for six dollars I am allowed to endure some cynical, manipulative concoction while I am surrounded by a mob of hooting subnormals.

I hate the visual and sonic assault of cinema in theatres. You are required to sit immobilized, deprived of 3 or 4 of your senses and half your mind while a torrent of questionable stimuli sluices down upon you like a psychotic's nightmare. I'm too much of a control freak like Mike in THE DEER HUNTER to sit still for that- I end up feeling like Alex in A CLOCKWORK ORANGE when he receives the therapy/punishment. I become overstimulated. Some day we will be able to dial into a film bank from our homes and watch any film we chose to on our TV screens. I'll dial up CHINATOWN, DAY OF WRATH, PRINCE OF THE CITY and 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ to start with, then some old POPEYE cartoons. None of this simpering, self-congratulatory dreck aimed at lower middle-class professionals. It makes me nauseous.

MUMBLES: Would you call yourself a surrealist?

The general notion of what Surrealism is- weird, dreamlike painting- is incomplete and fallacious. Historically, Surrealism is a very political outlook, and it wields an artistic methodology as a tactic. Surrealism, rigorously defined, is a doctrinal movement which employs painting and drawing as agencies of theory. Remember, Dalí was excommunicated by André Breton because he was not sufficiently tractable and rigorous with theory. Surrealism exerts itself prodigiously. Loosely speaking, many artists who have done surrealist work are not Surrealists.

However, Surrealists are pretty tolerant of work which has the right spirit, even if it is not expressed formally. The American group in Chicago, founded by Franklin Rosemont and others under the aegis of Breton, admires many diverse forms which satisfy the requirements of Surrealism: the vision of marvelous freedom, the subversion of miserabilism, the demolition of industrial death culture. They are adept at finding this spirit wherever they turn. They love KRAZY KAT, SMOKEY STOVER, the blues, early jazz, classics of animation (Bugs Bunny is a favorite), and all sorts of eccentric and radical work which can not be classified. They refer to non-Surrealists who produce such work as allies of Surrealism.

I work with this group and a few others. They publish a little of my stuff and vice versa. The work I do for them differs from what you see in the comix, although there are similarities. Methods of production differ; at the extreme, it is intention vs. automatism.

So, I am a natural-born Surrealist inasmuch as my work just comes out that way. They accept it. But the comix I do, although they may share that outlook, usually are not Surrealist and I try to keep them from being Surrealistic- I try not to pillage the imagery of Surrealism to get an affect, that is. A wonderful cartoonist who does comix which are unwaveringly Surrealist is Hal Rammel. There is a guy more comix readers should investigate.

MUMBLES: Any writers and/or artists that have influenced your work? Do you have any favorites?

Every mind that we encounter influences us, positively or otherwise. All minds may be interconnected- which is probably one reason that art and other manifestations of creativity move us so profoundly. Inevitably, you absorb or extract some form of energy or meaningfulness from contact with another mind. And the contact always provokes us and causes layers and deposits of mental sediment to be stirred up- the old epistemological sludge.

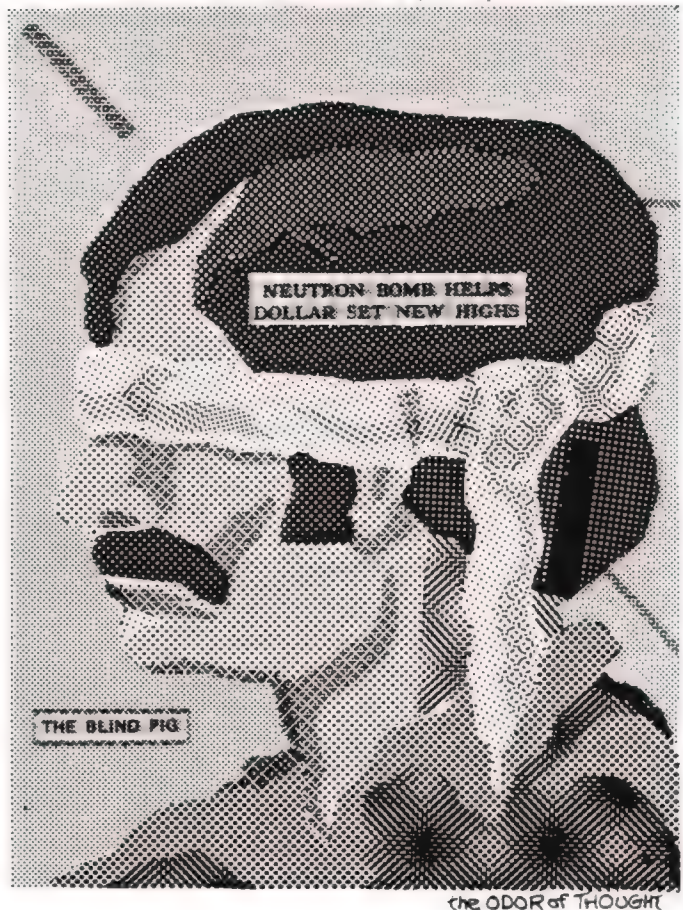
You can't not be influenced by an artist or writer. Some of them get in your blood, their influence stays with you. But every one that you pay much attention to moves you and it affects your work whether you like it or not. In my case, I'm probably influenced by writers and philosophers as much as I am by cartoonists and painters. Music also has an impact on my working moods and methods. I think that Ernst, Tanguy, de Chirico, George Herriman, Wallace Stevens, Jack Vance, Anaïs Nin, Camus, Berdyaev, Bob Kane, Victor Brauner and dozens of others, more and less famous, have been pretty thoroughly absorbed. And of course all the first great comix artists and many of the newer alternative comix artists mean a lot to me.

I always listen to music when I work: Bach, Mingus, Television, Coltrane, George Crumb, New Order, Ali Akbar Khan, Corelli, Eno, Homesick James or some other powerful artist who can not be ignored.

All of that stuff went in, and some of it is bound to come back out- whether I am aware of it or not. As for favorites, all but one of the above names mean a lot to me. Other names I bother to mention in this interview can usually be taken as favorites. But that leaves out many figures who are important to me. I like the work of most serious creators, so perhaps I can not name favorites- I can't name just five or six.

MUMBLES: How old are you? What do you do for a living?

The same age van Gogh was when he died. I'm not much of an artist, but I still have both ears. Right now I manage a retail wine business. I have that skill, it pays money. I belong there like a dolphin belongs in a washtub. I'm subject to unass the place pronto.



the ODOR of THOUGHT

MUMBLES: In the same piece mentioned above, you seem preoccupied with the dreaming process... would you say the dream dreams the dreamer? Are we dreaming now?

The world must be structured along the lines of what we see, and probably we perceive things in a way analogous to the Kantian notion of categories. It makes little sense to postulate that we are seeing a world that does not really exist, or that we are seeing phantoms, or that we are the dream of some dreamer. The problem is not that we see things which do not exist, but that we do not see all that does exist. That is where we go wrong, where we become confused, where the dreamlike quality of life arises: in our interpretation of what we perceive.

We all have the habit of regarding our perceptions as the truth, as absolutes, even though we know better. I think that what we see around us is pretty accurate, but only in as far as we see. We are aware of only the tip of the iceberg of existence. We sense the framework of things around us, but our limited perceptions and muddled intellects can not fill in this matrix with sufficient information to guide us.

We dwell in chaos, yet we must act, so we are adamant about the validity of perceptions which our minds tell us must be incomplete. We must have a place to stand, something to go on, so our minds attempt to fill in some of the gaps in our awareness. We shift mental gears automatically, with little consciousness of doing so, in order to keep pace with the flux of events. We are in and out of all manner of modes and states of consciousness perpetually; varying levels of attention and concentration and fantasy and rest. That is how we make up for our limitations, either by constant reinterpretation, by rationalization, or by outright fantasy. There must be whole strata of existence which are beyond our reach, just as the visual world is unknown to a worm. We receive no stimuli from these realms, because we are not equipped to receive them.

But most of us realize there must be a lot more to things than we are aware of, and that is one reason why art is so important to us. Art is a message from these regions which we are unable to explore. Usually, an artist begins his career by imitating what he has seen. If he works long enough, he becomes original; things emerge from him unbidden. Where is that coming from? By looking closely at things, but at an "angle" like Don Juan taught, artists train themselves to see what they could not see before. These may not be "real" visions of other states of being, but they help us deal with our inadequacy. I like to try to go for that instead of doing rational, linear pictures. I don't know any more than the next guy, but I might be more aware than most of what I don't know.

MUMBLES: Do you think that art should be thought provoking?

I'd say that one of the main problems for art is people saying what it should be. Strong art that must be noticed inevitably will stimulate thought. I prefer art which is pleasurable and which also encourages us to think. Remember that I said above that the small press badly needs to upgrade the intellectual and serious aspects of its output.

I would hesitate to say that art should try to be thought provoking, however. Good art has to do more than that. Art appeals to many levels of awareness in both the mind and body (please, no accusations of dualism). It has an emotional effect on us, e.g., and emotions are things of both mind and body. Furthermore, if humans have instincts, then art awakens them. It can make us dream, and dreaming is not thinking. Or we can simply bask in art, feel it somatically.

We spend very little time thinking. We think that we are thinking, while we are merely awash in tides of mental, emotional, physical, sensory, eidetic, chemical and conditioned call and response. We are constantly remembering, anticipating, daydreaming, drowsing, hoping, hallucinating, feeling and interpolating. All of this adds up to awareness, yes? But only part of it is thinking.

If you want to see what is called thinking, read some Heidegger or Kierkegaard or Wallace Stevens. Study a score by Bach or Elliott Carter. If you are honest with yourself, you will be forced to admit that you seldom do any highly organized and directed thinking.

Art will succeed if it satisfies us on many levels of awareness, and if it does not attempt to be thought provoking at the cost of our pleasure. If art is successful in moving us to experience deep pleasure, we will think. Art will provoke thought, but that can not be its raison d'être. That is for philosophy.

MUMBLES: Can you list here what publications you have for sale, and your address?

My address is 102 South Lake Ave., Albany, NY 12208. I have about 20 small-size publications for sale. All of them are offset printed on good quality paper. It does not make much sense to list the titles because the titles will not provide your readers with any indication of the contents of the publications. If anyone wants to order my publications, let them send \$1.00, \$2.00, \$3.00... up to \$10.00 in increments of one dollar, and they will receive their money's worth. I can not respond to inquiries about what I have for sale. People write and ask what publications I have for sale. I spend a lot of time making replies, then, in some cases, I never hear from the people again. So here is a word to you kids: don't bother working artists with frivolous inquiries. If you want to make a serious inquiry, send return postage or some money. Otherwise, don't expect someone who is working 12 to 16 hours a day to reply to you. If you like comix, help us out by ordering. Don't make our job harder.

MUMBLES: What do you like to do for fun?

I like to be alone in the woods with my magnum, so I can pop a few caps at tin cans and talk with the crows. Crows are a source of inspiration and information for me. I like to go drinking with the boys, root for the Celtics and Raiders, and listen to Bach. All that redneck kind of stuff. I like to go on the road in autumn.

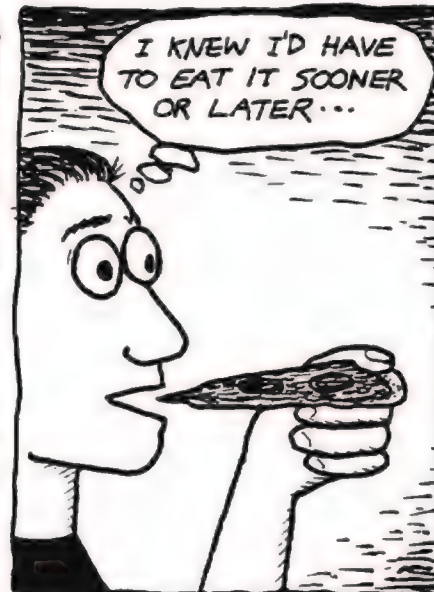
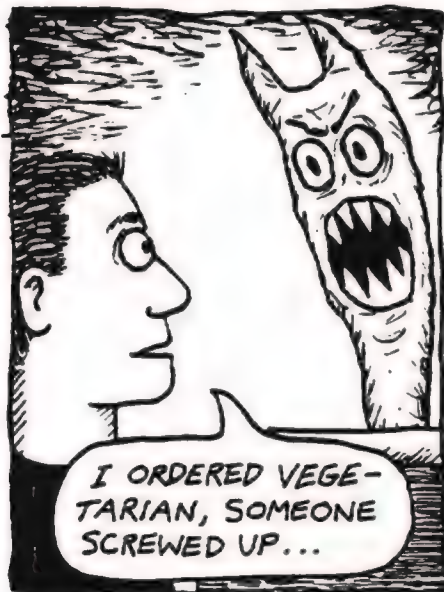
MUMBLES: Are you as weird as you seem to be?

I've only discussed matters that I believe must be self-evident to most of your readers. Now, if I were to reveal some of my private ideas, they might seem to be a little weird.

MUMBLES: Any closing remarks?

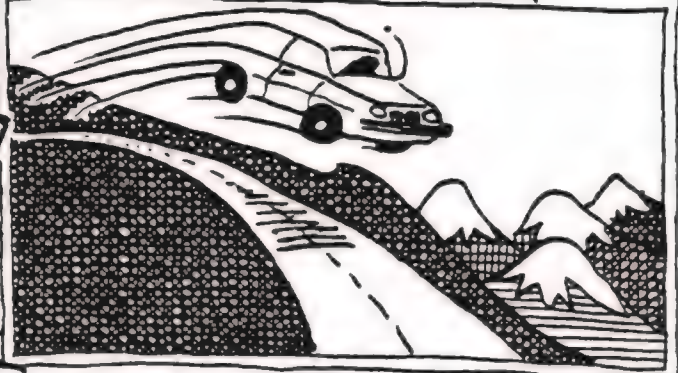
Thank you for your kindness. Hello to Tom Brinkmann, vanished into Texas. Reagan has been re-elected, and Jerry Falwell is talking like a cabinet member. Laws restricting and limiting our freedom are being passed or considered all over the country. Rumors of war are everywhere. Use that alternative press, boys, or lose it.





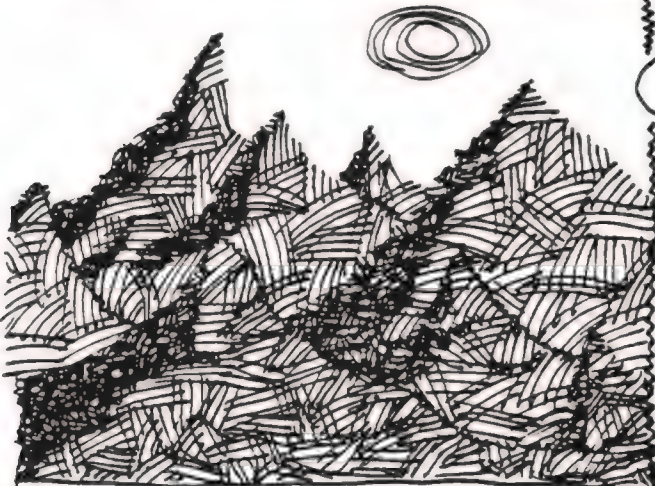
THE DAY I WORE BRUCE CHRISLIP'S TIE

I CLEARED SNOQUALMIE PASS AT 85 MPH, MY VEINS FLOWING WITH THE SIX-PACK I GUZZLED BETWEEN WASHTUCNA AND CLE ELUM. I WOULD LAND IN SEATTLE IN AN HOUR...



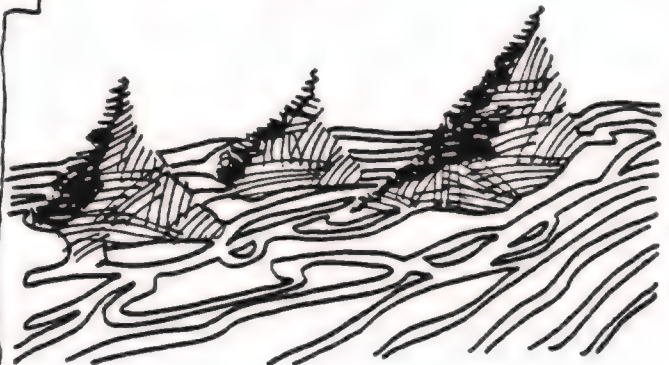
BACK HOME, MANY THOUSAND YEARS AGO, THE PALOUSE REGION HAD BEEN A STEEP AND MOUNTAINOUS LAND...

BUT IT WAS SEATTLE THAT WAS ON MY MIND. THE LAST TIME I WAS THERE I ATTENDED A GALLERY SHOW OPENING...



I WAS POUNDING DOWN THE JAVA TO SOBER UP. SUDDENLY I REALIZED I LEFT MY SUIT IN PULLMAN, AND GAGGING AT THE THOUGHT, SPEWED AND SPILLED THE STEAMY JOE ALL OVER MY ONLY GOOD SHIRT.

A FISSURE RIPPED OPEN IN THOSE PALOUSE MOUNTAINS, BLANKETING THE AREA WITH THE LAVA THAT OOZED OUT...

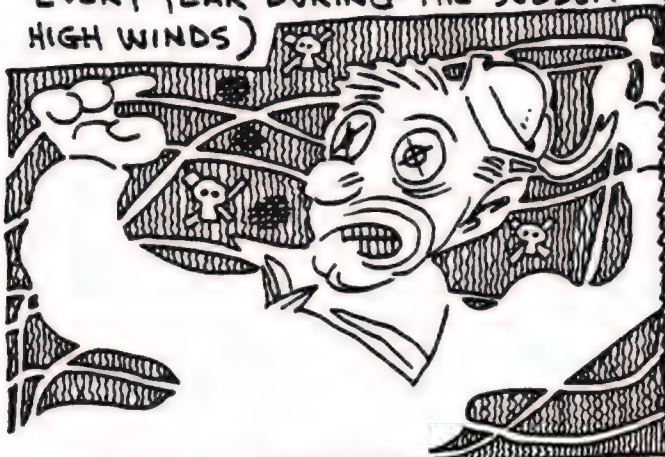


THE GALLERY OWNER PRANCED FROM ONE BIG-WIG TO ANOTHER; FIRST, THE WELL KNOWN BUYERS...

THIS GUY IS GONNA BE HOT, I'M TELLIN' YA...



(THIS FISSURE IS NOW A DEEP, NARROW LAKE. DECEPTIVELY PLACID IN APPEARANCE, BOATERS DROWN EVERY YEAR DURING THE SUDDEN HIGH WINDS)



I SHOWED UP AT BRUCE CHRISLIP'S DOOR. BRUCE WAS OUT (PLAYING THE HORSES AT LONGACRES?). I MUST'VE LOOKED LIKE A STRUNG-OUT GEEK, BUT JOAN CHRISLIP WAS KIND ENOUGH TO LEND ME BRUCE'S WHITE SHIRT AND CLIP-ON TIE.



MY BLADDER WAS BLOATING, MY HEAD WAS FLOATING, BUT AS I DESCENDED ON MY OWN VICIOUS VECTOR, ALL I COULD THINK ABOUT WAS A GOOD SHIRT AND TIE...



... SECOND, THE OPINION MAKERS, THOSE ARBITERS OF CHIC WHO PRONOUNCE JUDGMENT WITH GALL ON THEIR SIDE. NAME-DROPPING IS BIG HERE...



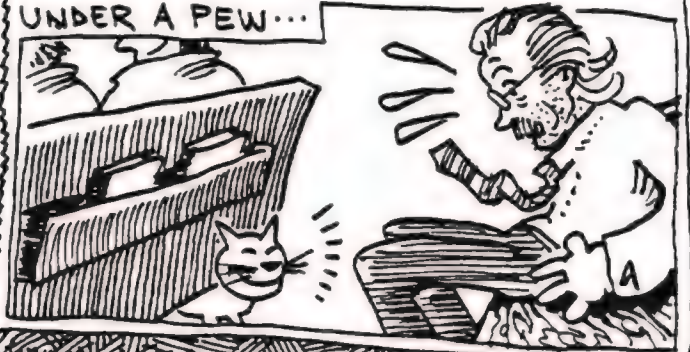
AFTER THE LAVA, AN ICE PLUG FROM A RECEDING GLACIER BROKE, DRAINING A LAKE (NOW THE N. IDAHO PANHANDLE), WHICH RESULTED IN THE BIGGEST FLOOD IN GEOLOGICAL HISTORY...



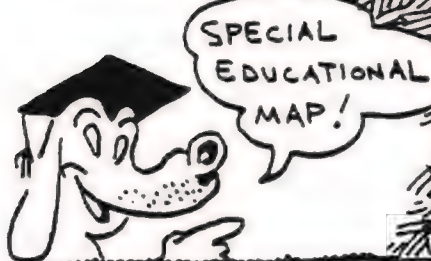
AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE POND
STOOD THE "ARTIST."



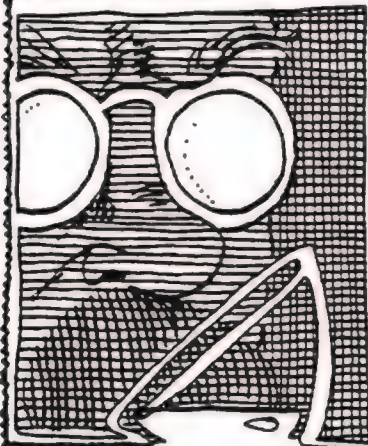
I MADE IT TO THE WEDDING ON TIME.
MY HEAD WAS THROBBING, I WAS
WEARING BRUCE'S CLIP-ON TIE.
DURING THE VOWS, I LOOKED DOWN
AND SAW A CAT SMILE AT ME FROM
UNDER A PEW...



THE FLOOD CUT THROUGH CENTRAL
WASHINGTON, WIPING ALL THE SOIL
TOWARD THE PALOUSE (DEEPEST
TOP SOIL IN THE U.S.). THE FLOOD
LEFT CENTRAL WASHINGTON WITH
DIDDLY-SQUAT, EARNING THAT
SECTION THE NICKNAME
"SCAB LANDS"...



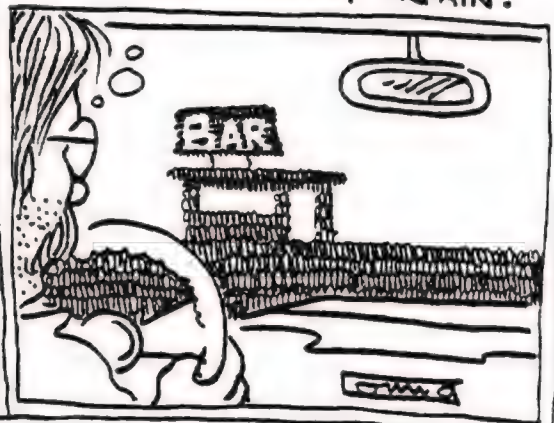
I STOOD IN THE
CORNER, DRINKING
FREE WINE ...



GAVE BRUCE BACK
HIS CLIP-ON TIE,
A PIECE OF ART
IN AND OF ITSELF.

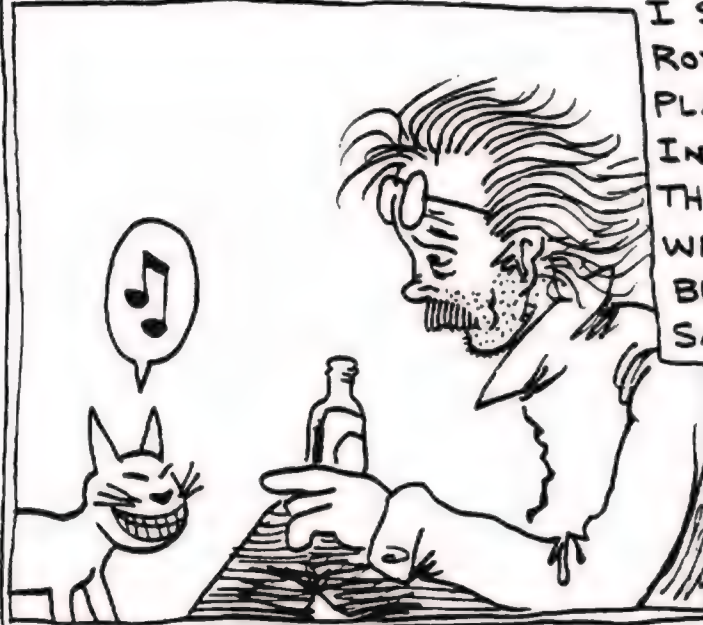


IN THE SCABLANDS, I DOWNED
ANOTHER SIX-PACK, BY ROYAL
CITY I GOT THIRSTY AGAIN.



I STOOD IN THE CORNER, DRINKING FREE WINE, FEELING SUPERIOR. ARTISTS LIKE THESE, I DECIDED, WERE LEECHES ON SOCIETY, CONTRIBUTING NOTHING...NOT UNLIKE LAWYERS, PSYCHIATRISTS, AND THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF CALIFORNIA'S METROPOLITAN CENTERS.

I DESPISED THEM ALL.



I SPENT THREE HOURS IN THAT ROYAL CITY DIVE, THREE HOURS OF PLAYING SHUFFLEBOARD WITH DRUNK INDIANS. THREE HOURS OF DRINKING. THREE DECADES TO HIT THIS POINT, WHERE PUKING MY GUTS OUT BECOMES COMMON PLACE. A CAT SMILED UP AT ME.

I DESPISE MYSELF.

AFTER ALL THE LAVA, WATER, AND DIRT, ONLY THE HIGHEST OF THE ORIGINAL PALOUSE RANGE PEAKS ARE STILL VISIBLE. THE SOIL ON THE PEAKS IS DIFFERENT, AND THEY ARE ISLANDS OF TREES AND FLOWERS IN A SEA OF WHEAT.



AND I NEVER WAS MUCH OF A MOUNTAIN CLIMBER. TOO AFRAID OF HEIGHTS, I GUESS.

SHAPES II

BY BOB X



Yes, it's been four years since the last MUMBLES appeared. And that was the MUMBLES READER, mostly stories. It's been five years since MUMBLES #4 came out, the last anthology of mainly comics. Now here is MUMBLES #6, a cross between the READER and the first four MUMBLES numbers, all stories by John E, illustrated by six different artists.

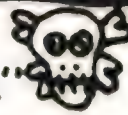
In 1983 I sent Steve Willis a long, rambling story about experiences in the Great Northwest titled THE GREAT AMERICAN PIPE DREAM. Steve suggested I send the story to Bob "X", then just getting XEX GRAPHIX off the ground with his buddy XNO. Bob liked the story and agreed to illustrate part of it titled SNAKE PARANOIA IN THE LAND OF OZ. It became a joint XEX/MUMBLES mini-comik published the following year. About the same time I'd become friendly with The Pizz, who was breaking on the scene with his great REVERAND BLOOD and CHRIST ON A CRUTCH comix. He agreed to illustrate a story titled FIRE AND SMOKE, which became the first (and last) CROSS COUNTRY COMIX PUB. James Waltman was next, illustrating a story I wrote as a take-off on Poe's TELL TALE HEART titled YOU SMELL LIKE BLOOD. This was printed on blood-red paper, digest-size, and published by MUMBLES PUBLICATIONS. Margot did a fine job interpreting MODUS OPERANDI in 1986, this one published for the first time in these pages. Mary Fleener drew the panels for THEY WERE IN LOVE, which first came out as her first LIES THEY TELL comik, then it later appeared in SNARF #10. Her treatment of LOADED makes it's debut here. George Velez illustrated THE BLOOD BATH, first published in THRESHOLD OF REALITY in 1987. Thanks to all these fine artists, those who are still in contact, and also those I've lost track of over the years. You see what I mean.

John Eberly 3/89



NAKE PARANOIA

IN THE LAND OF OZ ...

STORY BY: JOHNE.
ART & LAYOUT BY: BOB "X" 
XEX GRAPHIX - MUMBLES.

JOHNE. MUMBLES. BOB "X" - XEX



BOB X

WE'ED BEEN UP FOUR DAYS...



BURNIN', CHURNIN' DOWN...

WE ARRIVED AROUND 4

HE WAS IN NO



WE WENT RITE TO BRENT'S

SHAPE TO TALK

WE SCORED AND SPLIT TO B.I.S

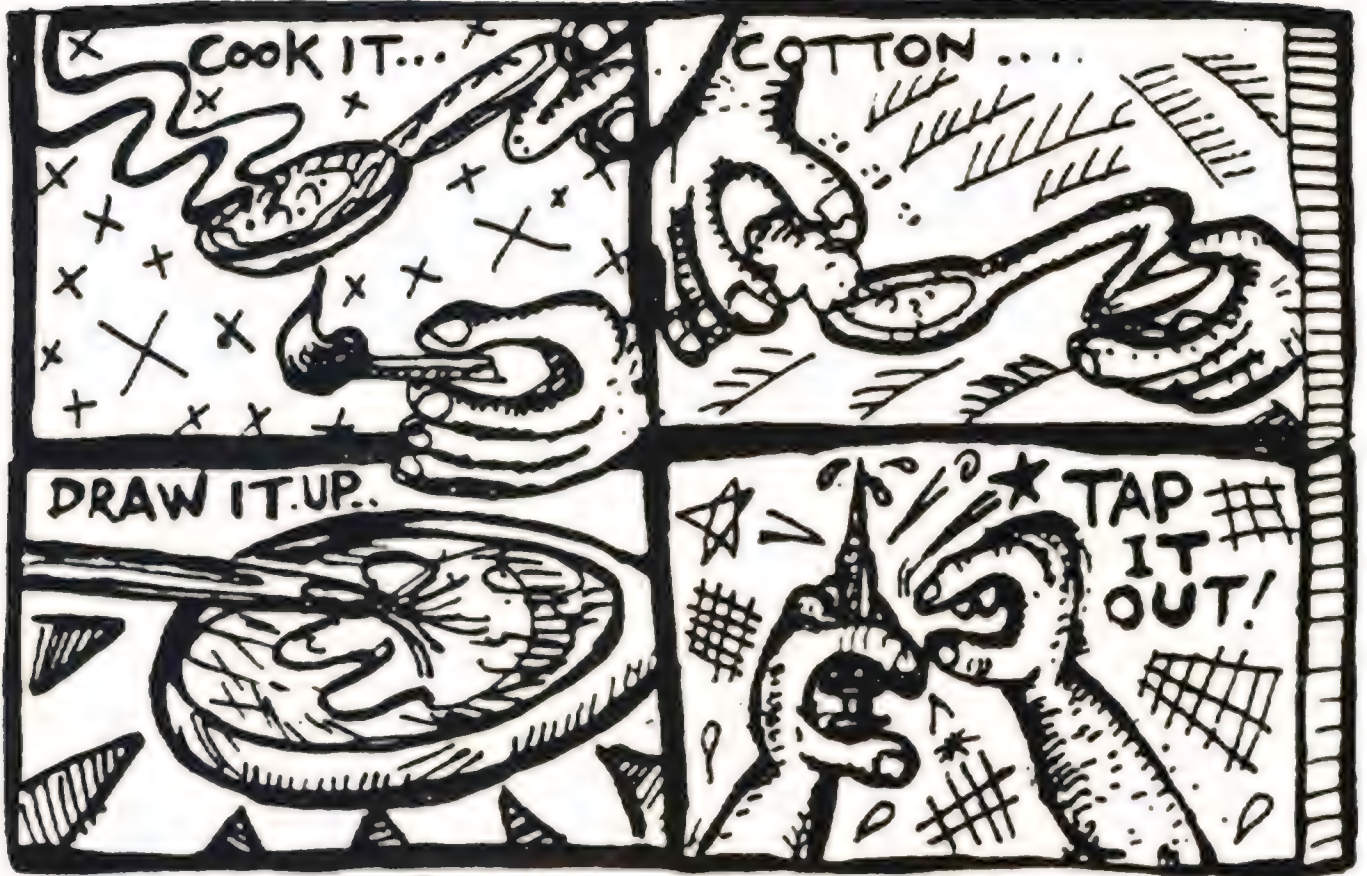


I HEADED STRAIT FOR



HE GREETED US IN KARATE ATTIRE

THE BATHROOM!



THE RUSH HIT LIKE A FREIGHT TRAIN.!!



AS I STOOD UP

I CAME OUT OF THE
BATHROOM AND ALMOST

I WAS A NEW MAN...
I FELT 'NORMAL' AGAIN...
WARM... GOOD...

BUMPED INTO A FAT GIRL
WITH BUCK TEETH!

SHE HAD A MOUSE

TO FEED TO HIS PET SNAKE

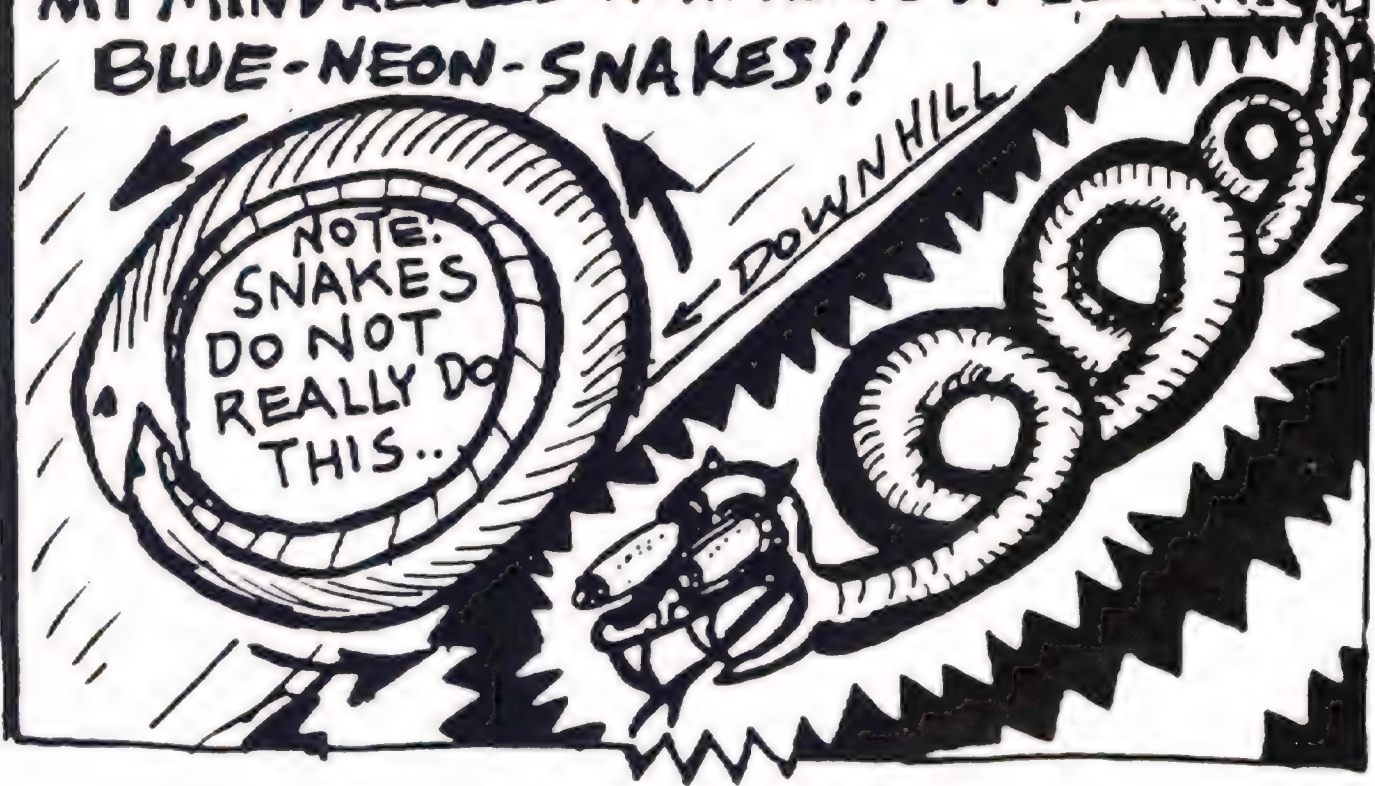




AS THE CROWD WATCHED, THE SNAKE DEVOUR THE RODENT, I REALIZED. I...



I HAD COME 2500 MILES TO SEE A BOY
CONSTRUCTOR EAT A VERY FREAKED-OUT MOUSE
MY MIND REELED WITH VISIONS OF ELECTRIC
BLUE-NEON-SNAKES!!



ROSEY ROONEY FELL INTO A



WATER MOCCISEN NEST AT
THE SPILL-WAY!!

GRANNY IN OKLAHOMA KILLS 'EM



WITH A HOE!

CUB SCOUT
LEADER GETS
BIT BY GARTER
SNAKE

TIM MCKLOSKEY
WOKE UP WITH A
GREEN PYTHON IN HIS
SLEEPING BAG WHILE IN
THE PHILIPPINES



AGE: 12

KANSAS CROOKS
MASTER
JIM BULL
HAD A BOA
HE KEPT
BEHIND THE
STOVE ALL
WINTER. IN
THE SPRING
AND SUMMER
SMALL DOGS
AND CHILDREN
WERE KNOWN
TO DISSAPPEAR.

CORNELL WILDE
ATE RAW ASP



IN THE FILM
"NAKED PREY"

JIM FRANCIS
SHOWS HOW TO
FEED A RATTLE
SNAKE AN
EGG AND
ALMOST HIS
FINGERS!



NEXT THING I KNEW...



I WAS IN CHERI'S BED.

AFTER 2 HOURS OF JUNKY SWEAT, I SLID INTO SLEEP WEARING ONE

SILENT EYE.



NOW.. I'M TALKING TO A MAN WITH A SLIGHT BEARD.



I'VE ONLY BEEN ON THIS.... PLANET FOR... A SHORT.. TIME...



CHANGED TO

WE BEAM DOWN TO A VALLEY....



ONCE IN THE BURNT ORANGE
VALLEY WE FIND:



A SNAKE OF 400 FT. OR MORE!

IT BLOCKS OUR WAY,
SPINS AND CHANGES



THE SCENE SHIFTS
I'M IN CHERL'S BED

SHE'S SMILIN' EVIL



COPPER HEADS!
COPPER HEADS!
ARE EVERYWHERE



I FEEL SICK.
RUN TO THE



BATH ROOM

SHOOTS X
SOME
MORE
DOPE



COME OUT OF
THE BATHROOM

ALL OVER CHERL!!



OMY GOD! SHE'S ONE TOO

MOM BRINGS ME MY PET SNAKE.....

I WAKE UP!
AGAIN!



AM I IN KANSAS?
IS THIS REAL? MOM
AND POP SURE LOOK
WORRIED I'VE HAD
A FEVER? ... NOW....

FOLLOW THE NUMBERS ON THE PANELS FOR STORY SEQUENCE....



I WAS TRYING TO QUIT SMOKING
BUT I HADN'T HACKED IT YET



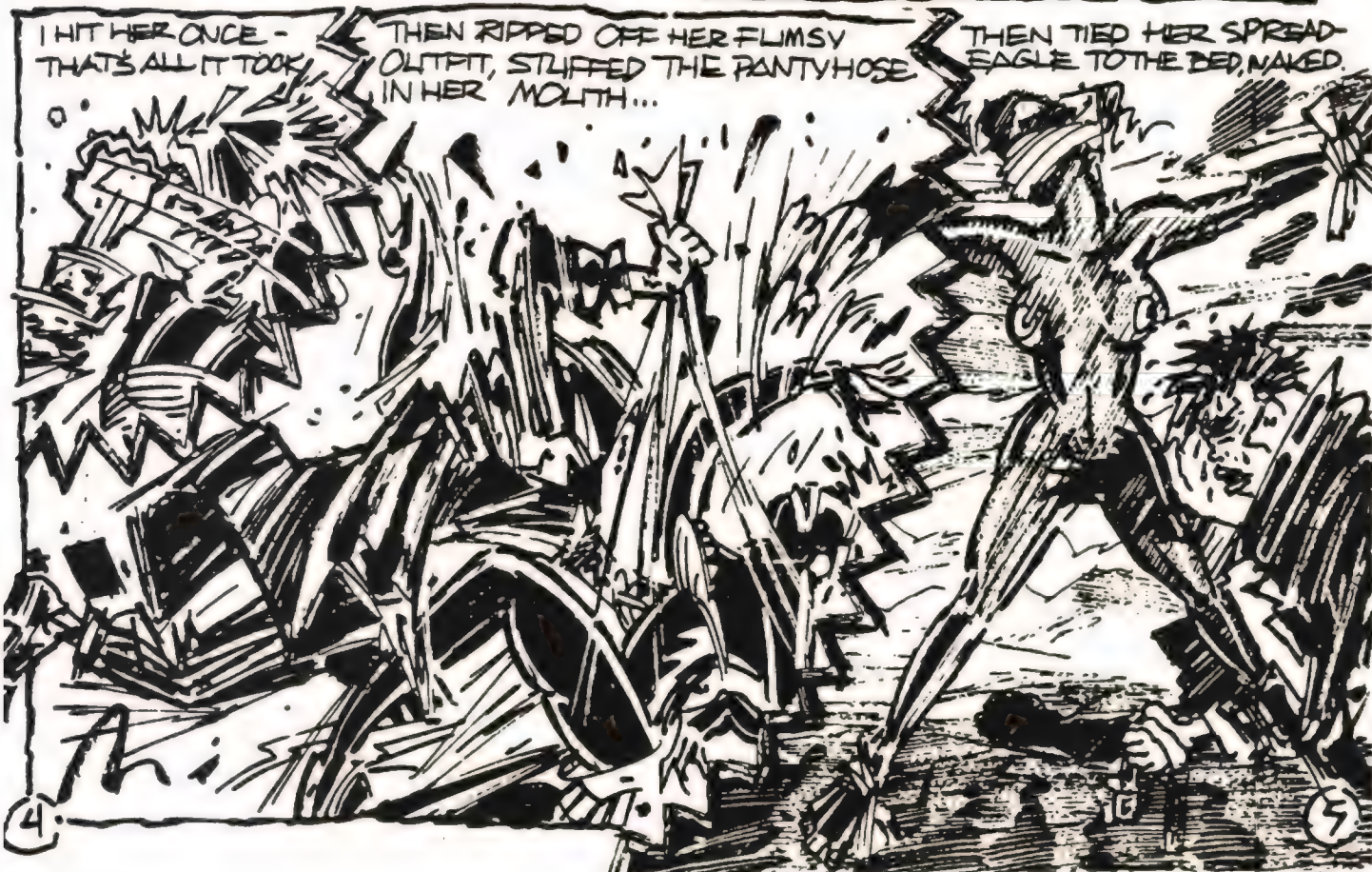
SO I'M WALKING DOWN TO THE
CORNER FOR A PACKA SMOKES
WHEN I SEE HER...



SHE WAS BLACK WITH A RED SORTA
SATIN DRESS ON, LIKE POLYRED INTO IT.

THE STORE WAS CLOSED
SO I SKIPPED THE CIGS
AND TAILED HER HIPS UP
THE STREET...

2 SHE STEPPED INTO AN OL' APARTMENT
BUILDING A MOMENT LATER I WAS IN THE
SEEDY LOBBY.



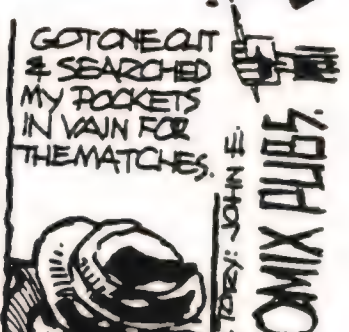
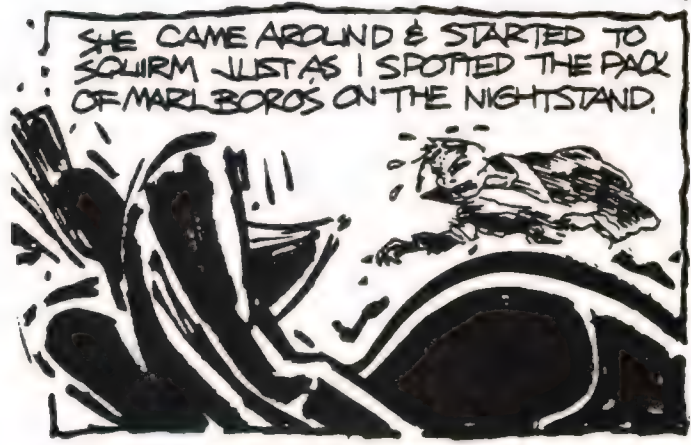
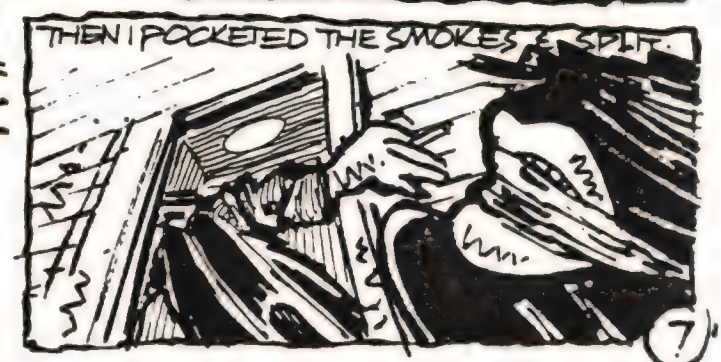
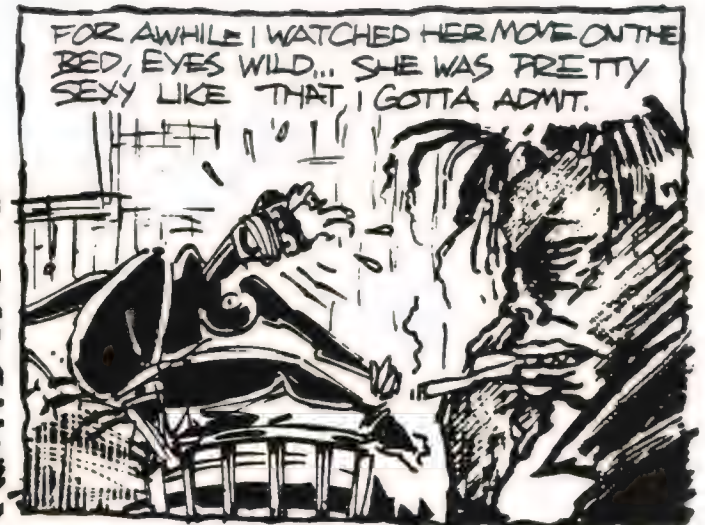
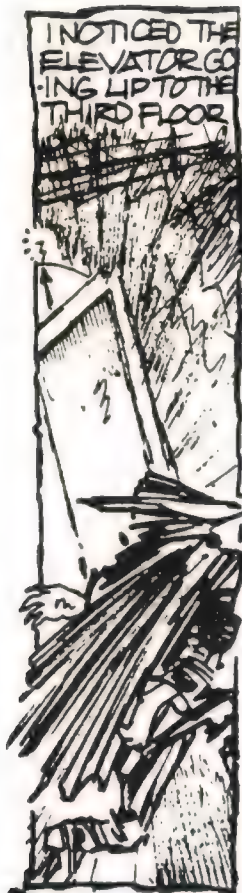
I HIT HER ONCE -
THAT'S ALL IT TOOK

THEN RIPPED OFF HER FLIMSY
OUTFIT, STUFFED THE PANTYHOSE
IN HER MOUTH...

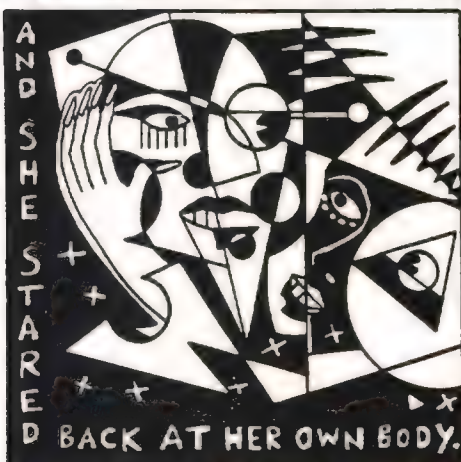
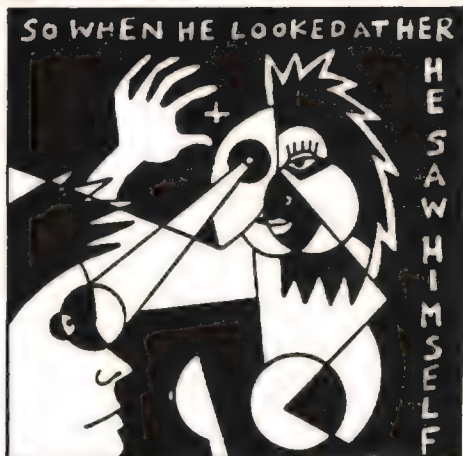
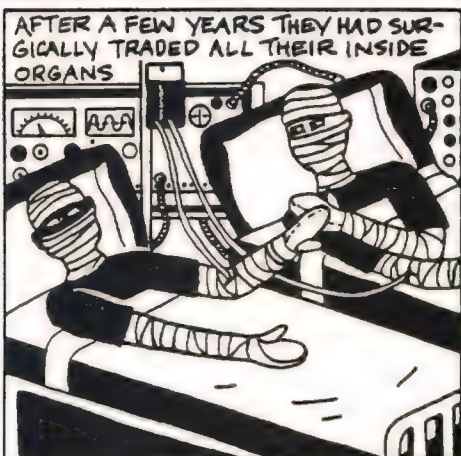
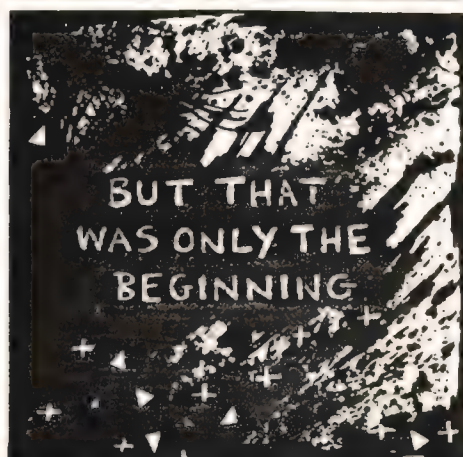
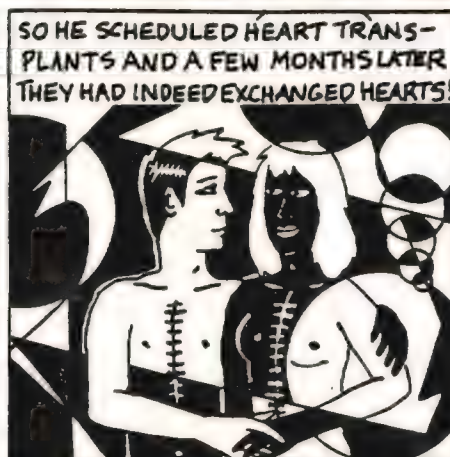
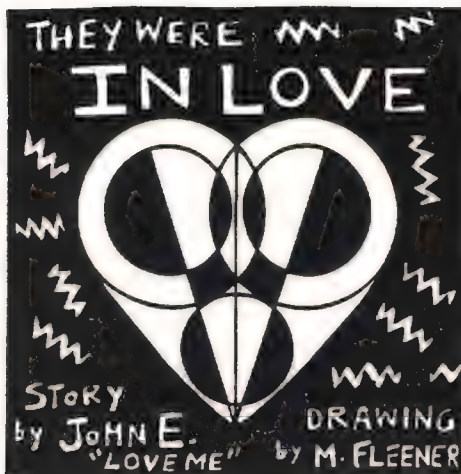
THEN TIED HER SPREAD-
EAGLE TO THE BED, NAKED.

4

5



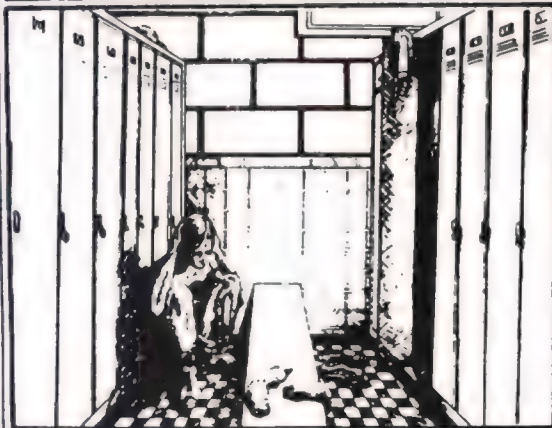
©1984 ART THE PIZZ STORY: JOHN E. CROSS COUNTRY COMIX PUBLS.



FIN



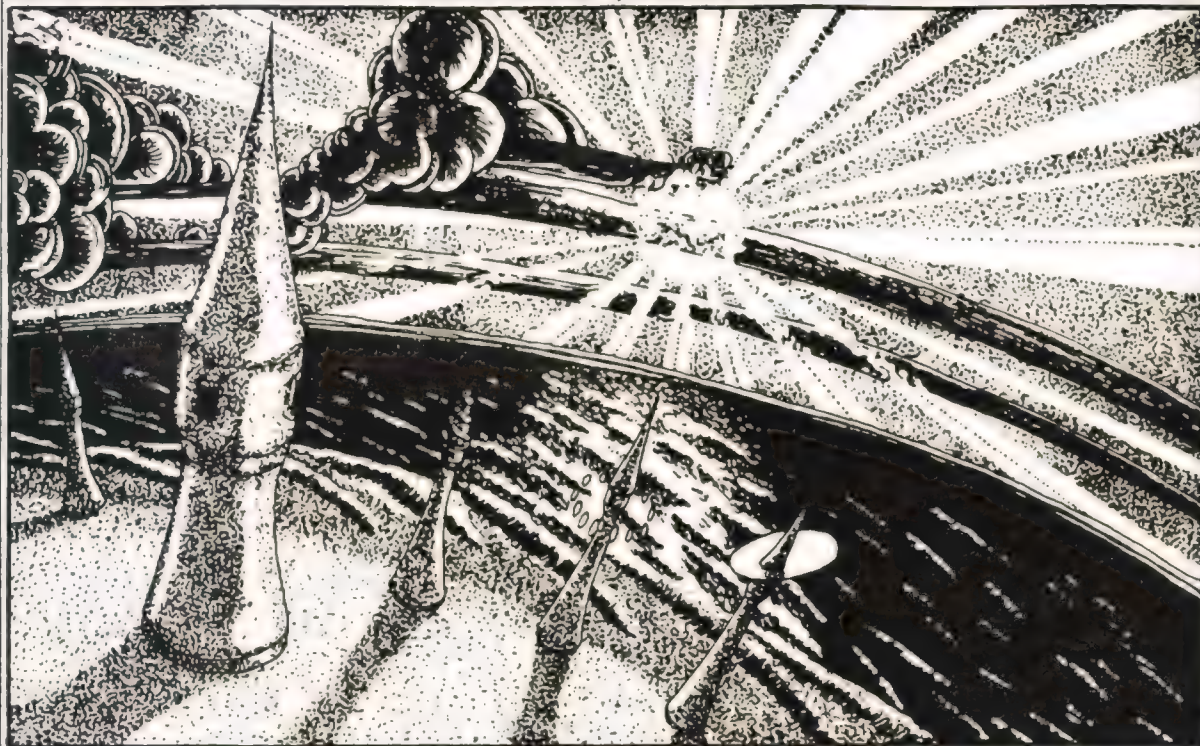
THE ROAR. THIS IS THE ROAR. COMING IN ON ALL SIDES FROM AETHER DOWN TO THE LOCKER ROOM.



IT IS THE ROAR OF ALL STORMS PRESENT, THE ROAR OF HURRICANES AND CYCLONES.



THE DRONE OF BELLS IN HELL.



NO ONE KNOWS HOW BLUE THE SKY IS THIS MORNING,



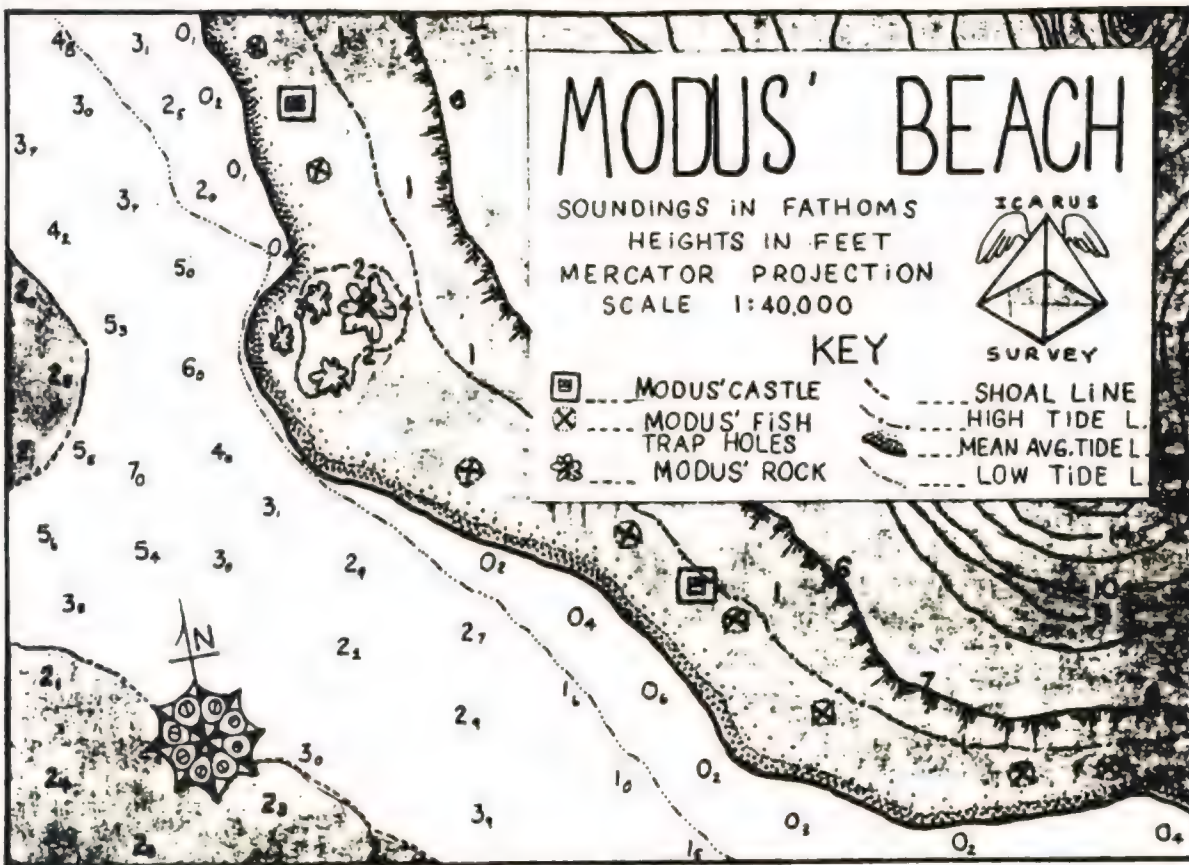
HOW GREEN IT MAKES
THE WATER SEEM.



NO ONE KNOWS THAT
OLD MODUS IS NOT DEAD.



WET NEAR THE EDGE .



MODUS HAS DONE THIS MANY TIMES.



SMACKS BLISTERED LIPS... WIND AND THE ROAR.

Tide Tables:

Time of tides shown is Eastern Standard Time. Add one hour for Daylight Savings Time. AM time is shown by an A after the time. No letter after the time indicates PM time.

JANUARY			FEBRUARY			MARCH			APRIL			MAY			JUNE			JULY			AUGUST			SEPTEMBER			OCTOBER			NOVEMBER			DECEMBER		
DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH



IN A WHILE HE EATS...



...AS MANY
AS HE CAN.

LOADED

ART: MARY FLEENER STORY: JOHN EBERLY © 1988

BENJI HAD A FACE
FULL OF ANGEL DUST
AND A LOADED .38

HE WEAVED OUT INTO THE STREET
AND LOOKED UP AT THE APARTMENT
BUILDING WINDOWS

THEY WERE
ORANGE
SQUARES

THAT
FADED
UPWARD

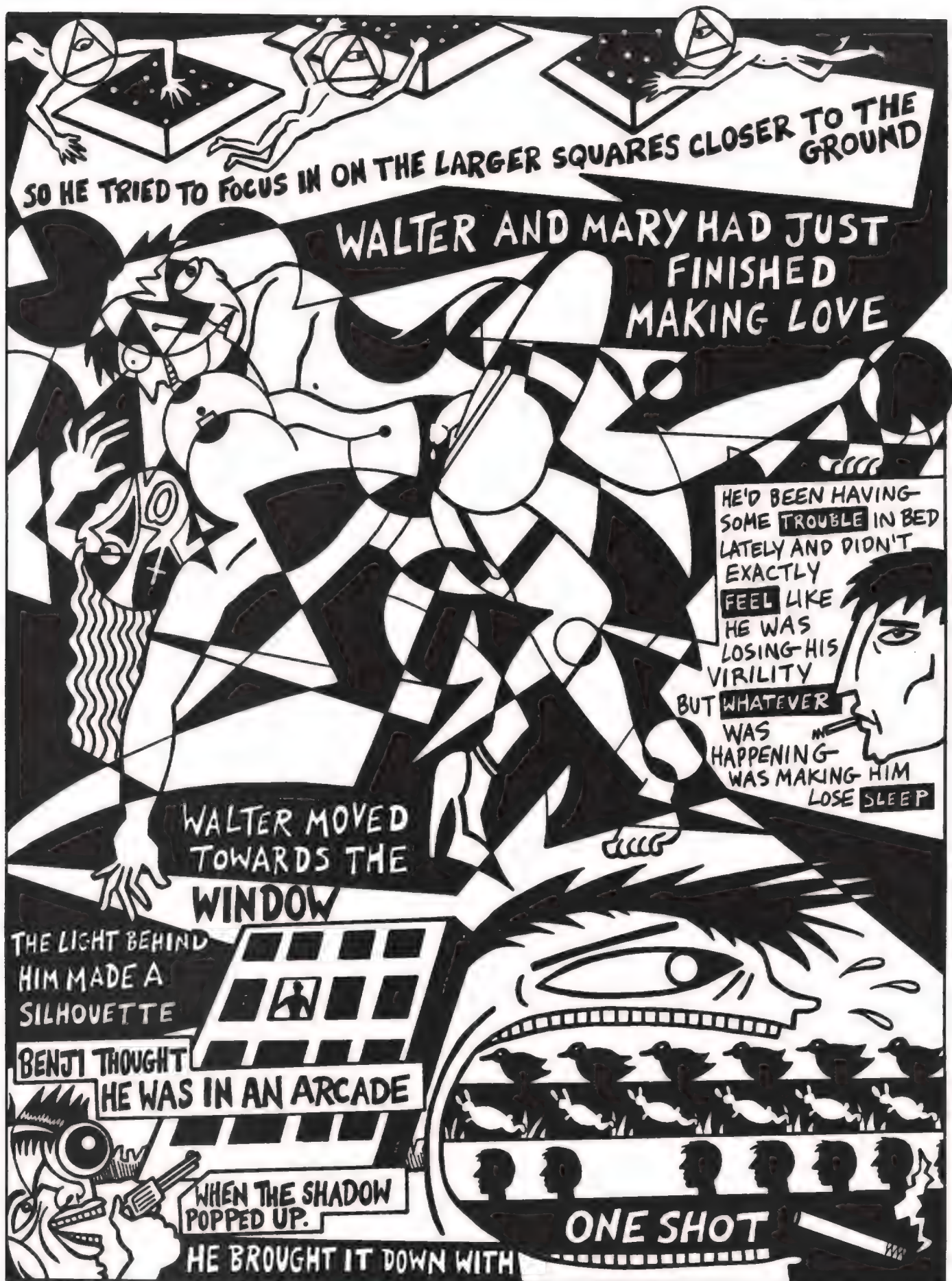
IN
PINPOINTS

AND
SUDDENLY
BECAME

STARS

Anyway,
BENJI COULDN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE





SO HE TRIED TO FOCUS IN ON THE LARGER SQUARES CLOSER TO THE GROUND

WALTER AND MARY HAD JUST FINISHED MAKING LOVE

HE'D BEEN HAVING SOME TROUBLE IN BED LATELY AND DIDN'T EXACTLY FEEL LIKE HE WAS LOSING HIS VIRILITY BUT WHATEVER WAS HAPPENING WAS MAKING HIM LOSE SLEEP

WALTER MOVED TOWARDS THE WINDOW

THE LIGHT BEHIND HIM MADE A SILHOUETTE

BENJI THOUGHT HE WAS IN AN ARCADE

WHEN THE SHADOW POPPED UP.

HE BROUGHT IT DOWN WITH

ONE SHOT

MUMBLES#7



EVEN A BLIND ACORN FINDS A PIG NOW AND THEN.

HORRIBLE

PUNS

and overworked

CLICHÉS

BY
JOHN E.

MUMBLES#7

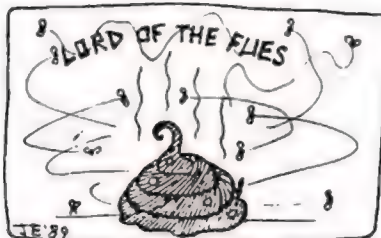
HORRIBLE

PUNS

and overworked

CLICHÉS

By
JOHN E.



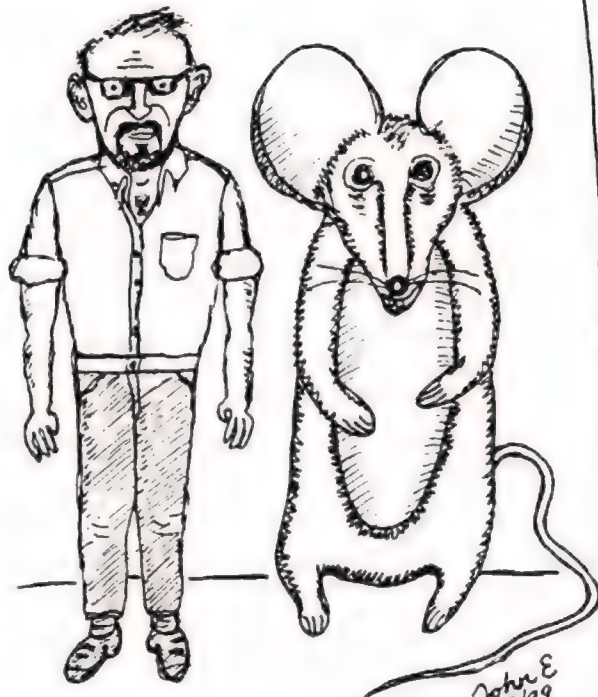
THIS COLLECTION STINKS. IT'S SO BAD I CAN HARDLY SIT HERE OVER IT LONG ENOUGH TO WRITE AN INTRODUCTION. SO I WON'T.

SOME OF THESE CARTOONS HAVE PREVIOUSLY APPEARED IN THE FOLLOWING:

MUTT
MALLIFE
FACTSHEET FIVE
L'DUH
SOLID GAS
KING SUCK
LOST + FOUND TIMES

WHY? I DON'T KNOW. THEY MUST ALL HAVE BAD COLDS.

MUMBLES#7, ENTIRE CONTENTS
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MUMBLES PUBLICATIONS, P.O. BOX
8312, WICHITA, KS 67208. U.S.O.F.A.



ME AND MY BIG MOUSE

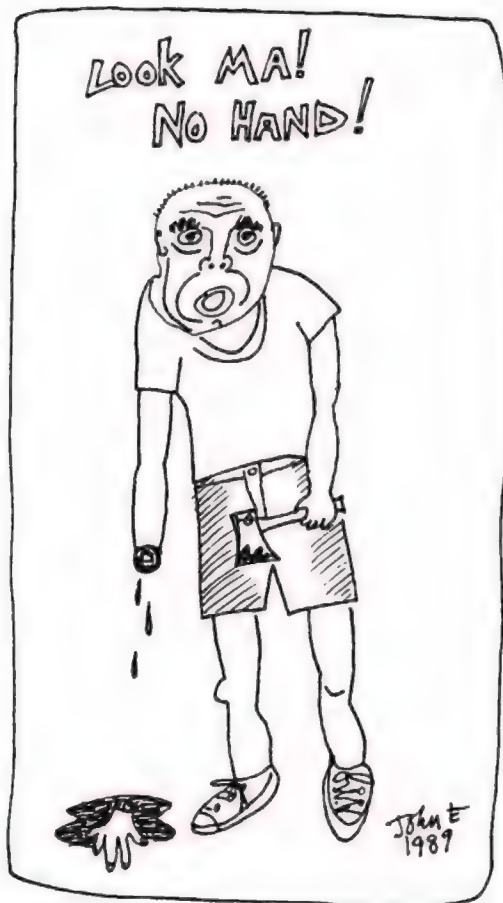
John E.
8/89



MOUSEY TONGUE

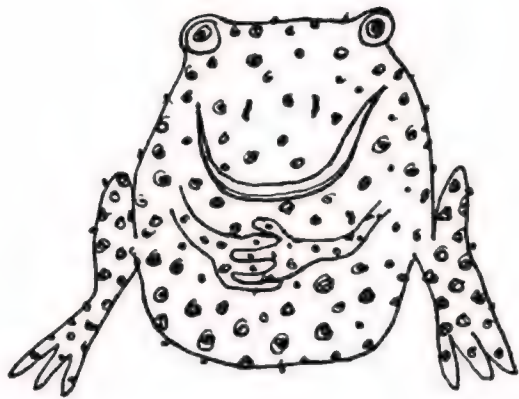


Soft frozen yogurt channelling
Ralph Waldo Emerson May 5, 1989.



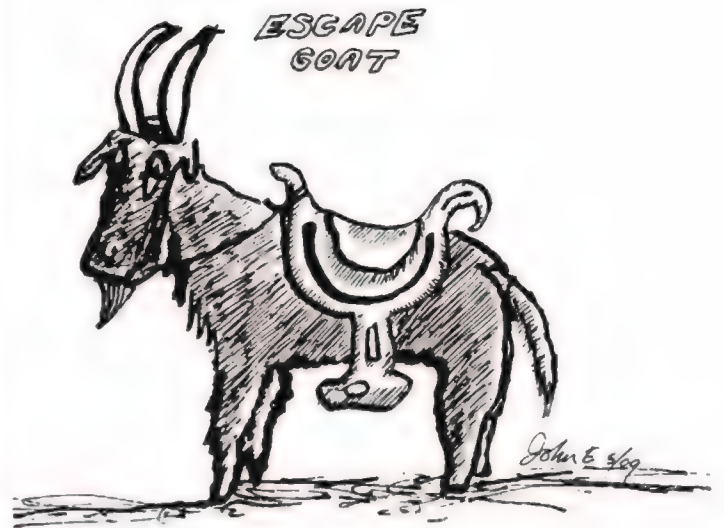
MIDDLE-AGED HAPPY FACE

John E
6/89



the toad not taken

John E 5/69

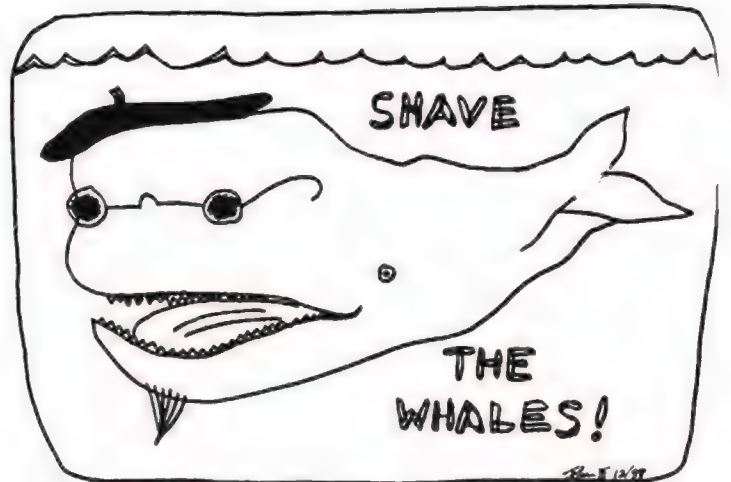


ESCAPE
GOAT

John E 5/69



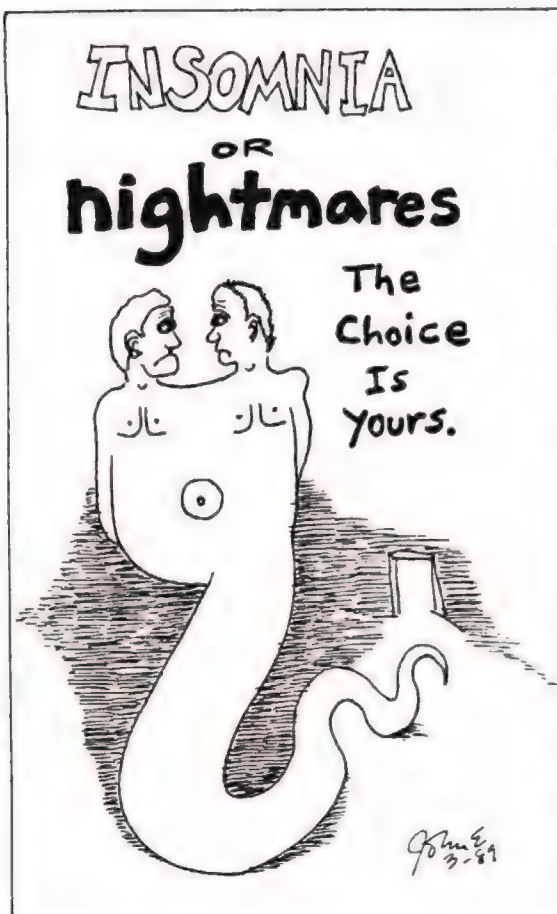
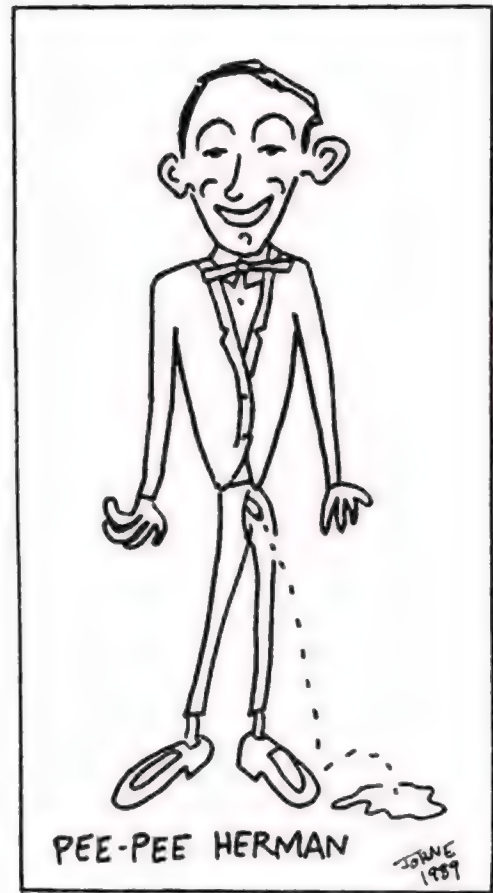
John E
5/69

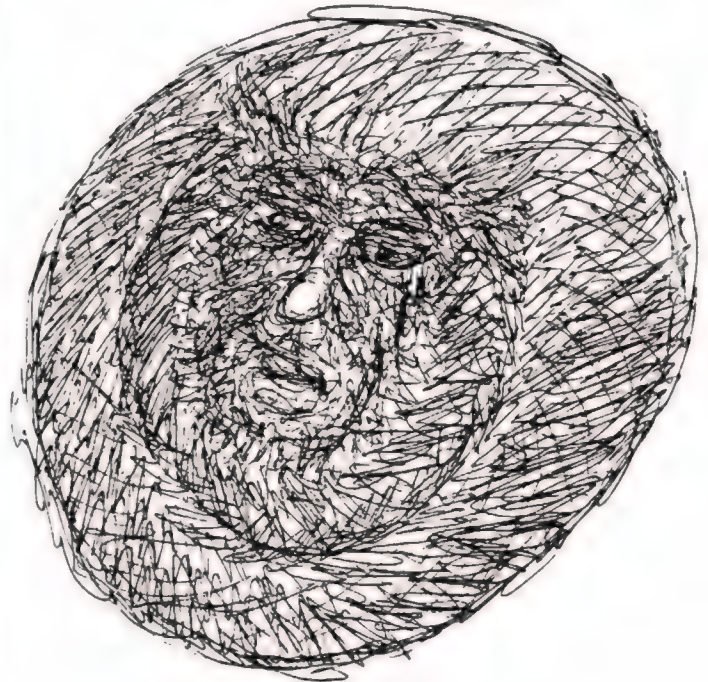
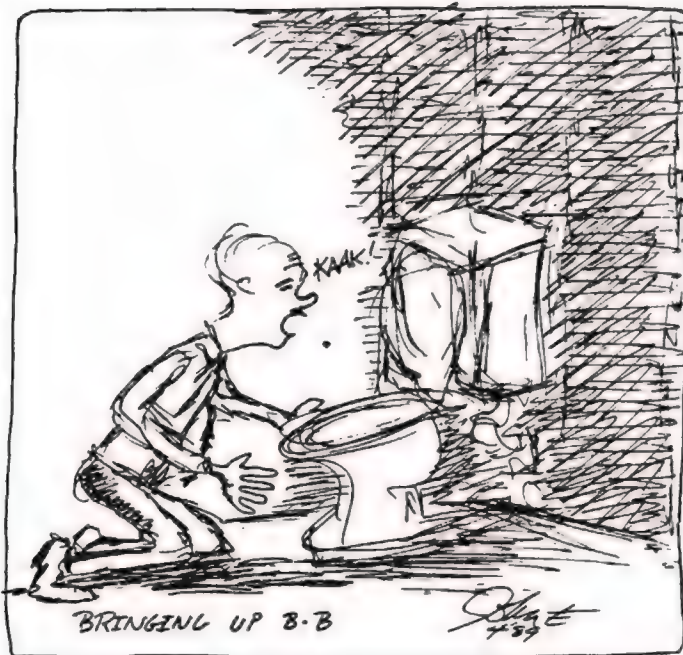
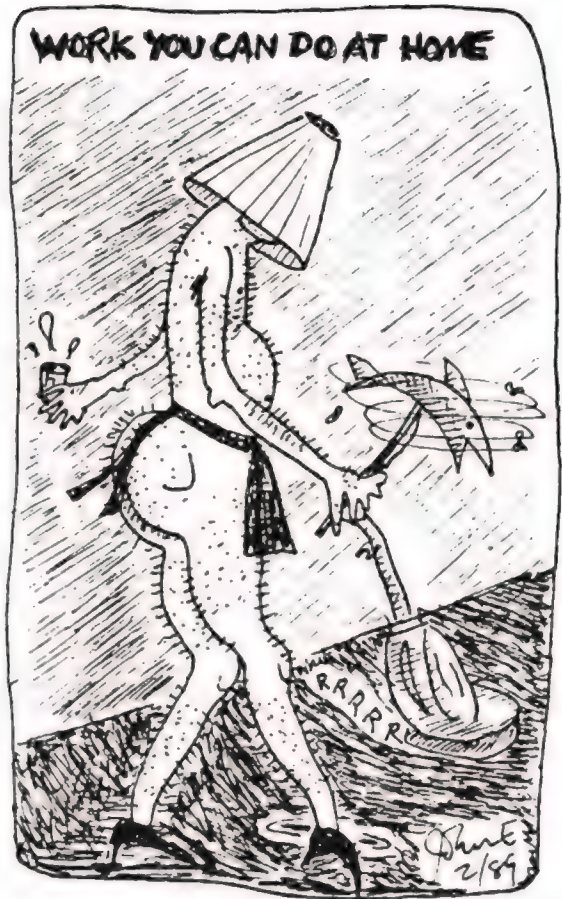


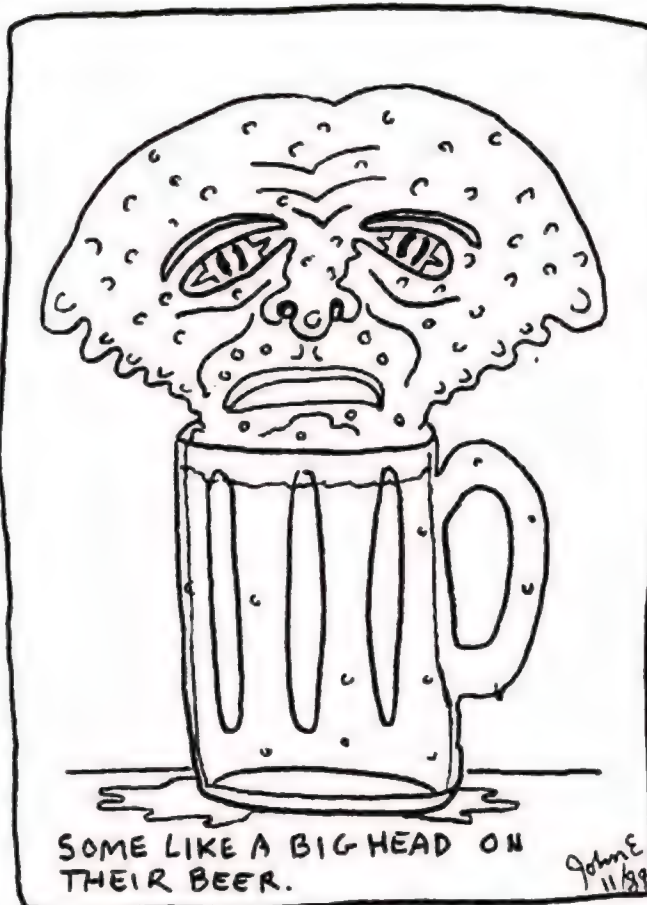
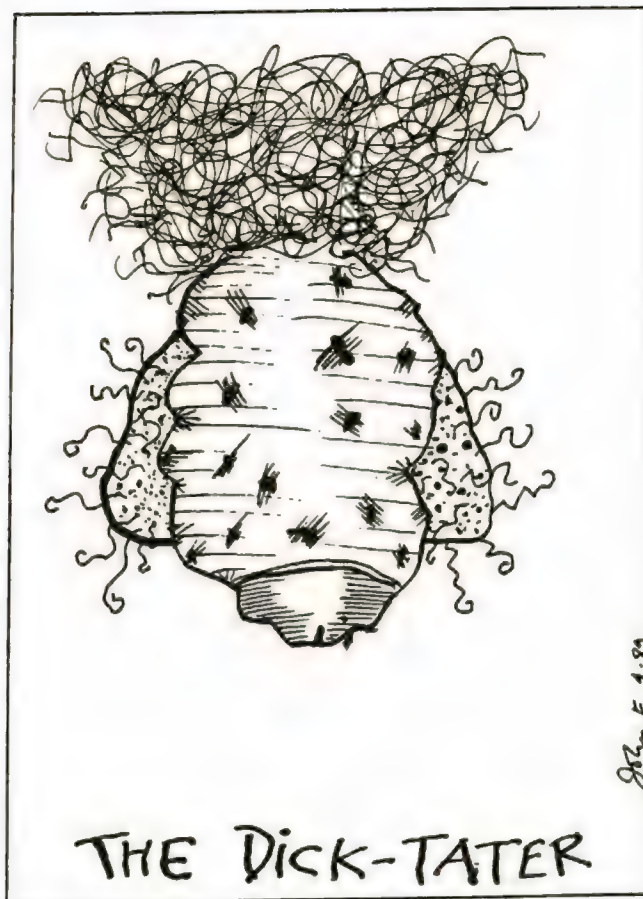
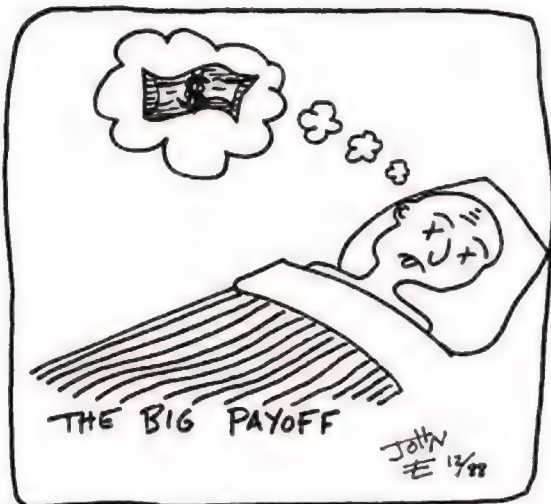
SHAVE

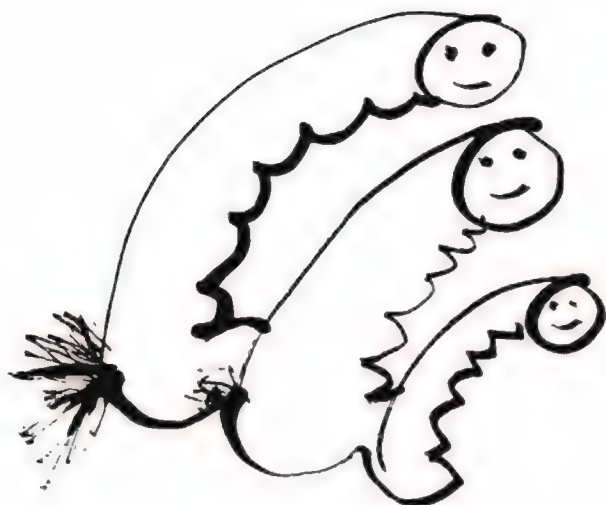
THE
WHALES!

John E 5/69









MR. & MRS. SMILEY FACE PENISHEAD
AND THEIR SON, PETE.

John E
4-89



11-12-88



THE SATANIC NURSES

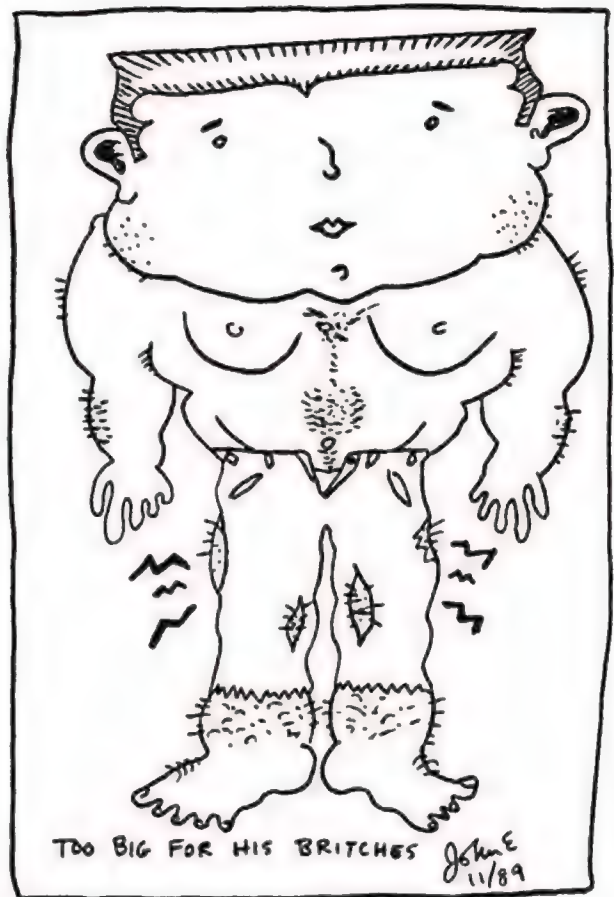
John E
5/89



THE BOOK OF THE MOUTH CLUB



BELLBOTTOMS ARE BACK!



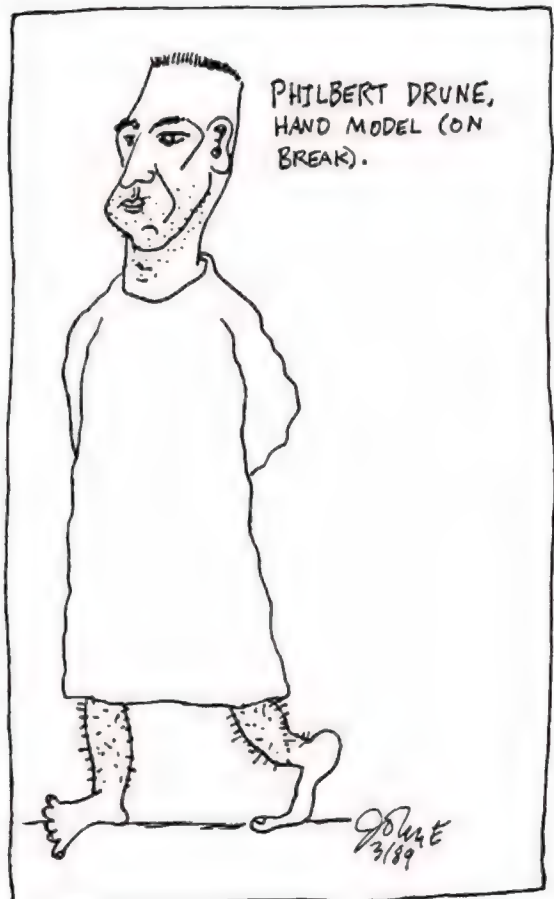
TOO BIG FOR HIS BRITCHES

John E
11/89

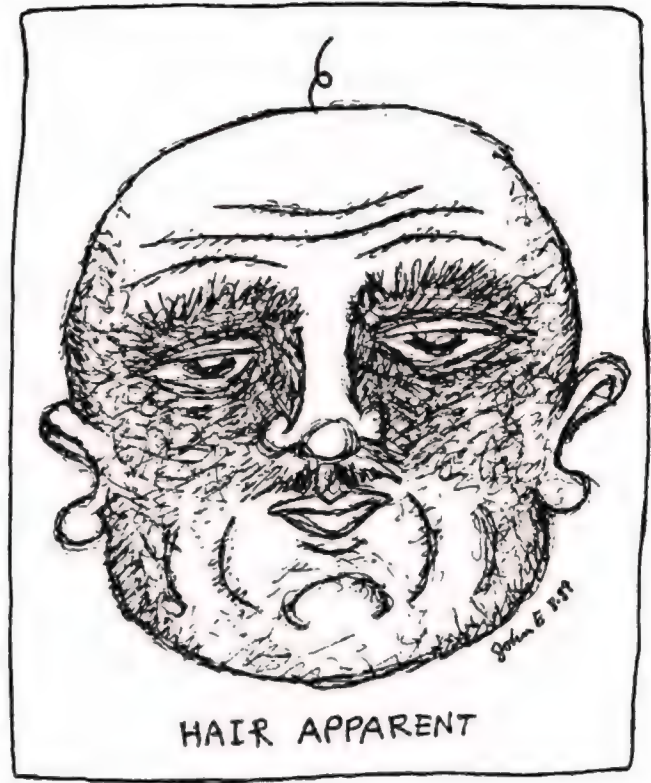


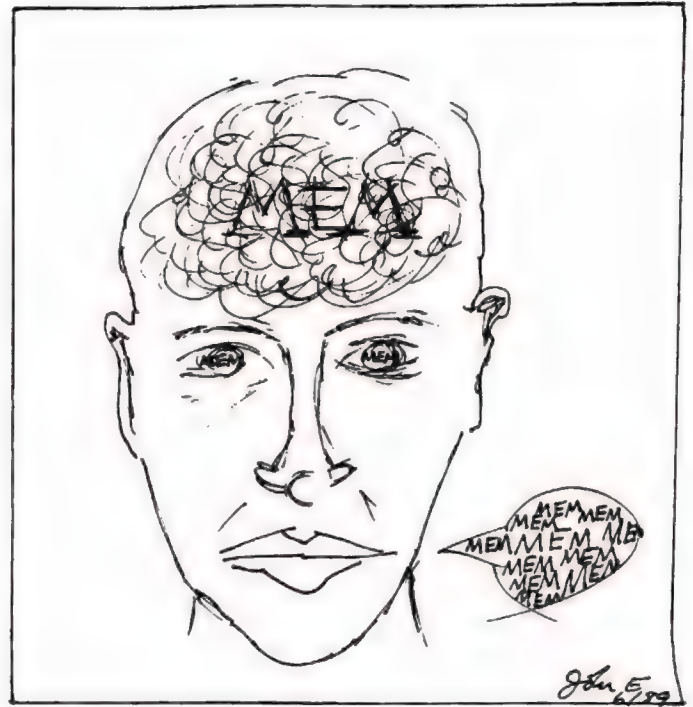
WHAT DO YOU MEAN I'M TOO
RUNNY? YOU THINK I STINK,
DON'T YOU? WELL, WHAT DO
YOU EXPECT FROM A RUNNY
LITTLE STINKING PIECE OF
POOP? HUH? WELL? HUH?

WHINEY THE POO-POO

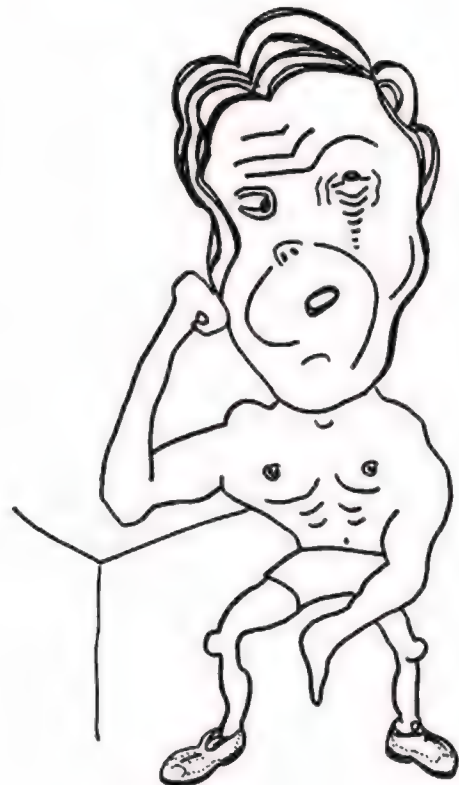


PHILBERT DRUNE,
HAND MODEL (ON
BREAK).





3/4/89
John E



A Brief History of MUMBLES



John Eberly performing with The Mumbles
at The 3D Klubb in Wichita 1986

leave for Australia to start a Carp fish ranch. Then another member, Rick, got married and mellowed out of the Punk scene. For Eberly, he decided to return to art school at Emporia State to finish his painting degree. P. Green went to work at a slaughterhouse. Job positions in the meatpacking industry were prominent in Kansas.

John Eberly continued writing short stories and was one of the early founders of the underground fanzine scene, homemade booklets loosely based on the San Francisco underground comics scene from the late 1960s. The fanzine community grew to a worldwide movement, proliferating based on the availability of inexpensive photocopying machines. Artists and writers could self-publish their works in small or large print runs based on whatever cash was on available, creating the layouts and bindings by hand.

In the mid-1980s, Eberly resurrected The Mumbles logo from the original version of the band and formed Mumbles Publications, which resulted in a long string of Eberly's self-published works. He became prominent in what became known as "The Mail Art Scene," where artists or writers shared their artworks globally through the postal service.



The Mumbles performing at the KMUW Aftermidnight Benefit BASH concert 1987

The original version of Mumbles was a band formed in July of 1976 by John Eberly based on his concept of a punk rock band. The original members were Richie Rich on drums, Shields on bass guitar, John E. (John Eberly) on guitar, and P. Green on vocals. The band's line-up was basically a living room R & R type band. Eberly said that "He hesitates to use the term 'Garage band,'" since all of the band members lived in utility apartments, all of which didn't include an actual garage.

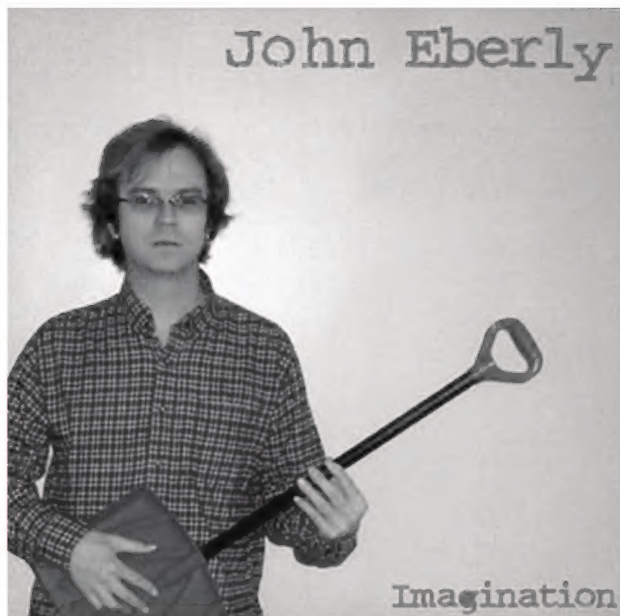
The Mumbles had loose plans to ride the wave of punk music that was happening at that time and following their enjoyment of intense bands of the late 1970s. Their influences were The Ramones, Television, The Stooges, and Punk Rock forerunners The Sex Pistols. The early version of The Mumbles performed cover versions of songs originally written by The Stooges, The Rolling Stones, and more offbeat bands such as Sam The Sham and The Pharaohs.

The Mumbles band thrashed their way into obscurity; they had plans to record a one-off single record. The single's songs were to be "Down and Shout," which was backed with a B-side named "John E. Be Good." They were going to release a 45rpm record on their homemade label called "Lethal Aid Records." The recording project never got off the ground; this caused a disgusted band member Shields, to pack up and



Mumbles comic book began as a solo venture for Eberly, who wrote and drew all of the issue contents for the first several issues. He invited other artists and writers from Kansas to contribute to a collaborative issue in the following issue. The following issues expanded with contributions from artists from across the country. The Mumbles Comix had a six-issue run beginning in 1984 and ending in 1990 with Eberly's final solo mini-book of bad visual puns in the form of cartoon illustrations.

In the mid-1980s, Eberly also formed a new version of The Mumbles band with Ken Haug on guitar, Date Stuke on bass, with Ron Stallbaumer on drums. This new version of the band was centered around Wichita, Kansas, performing music based on similar influences as the earlier band.



Bootleg recordings of The Mumbles band are still traded widely, with copies showing up in collector groups internationally. In current times there has been a resurgence of both mail-art and fanzines, with the original earlier publications now being collected as a historical movement by private collectors, universities, and museums. Copies of Eberly's publications can still be found worldwide and are included in The Museum of Modern Art's fanzine collection.

Special thanks to John Eberly and Mike Blur Wahweotten for their assistance in compiling this anthology.

- Demolition Kitchen Media, 2021

Their rehearsal space was dubbed "The Shed," this name became prominently featured in some of their cassette releases' titles. The new Mumbles band had an energy and power that gained them an impressive following. Eberly's vocal styles and Ken Haug's guitar could literally shake the roof off any venue they played.

The new Mumbles band released several recordings, mostly on cassette, which was the popular format for releasing recordings at that time. They also became a staple band for Wichita's late-night college radio program Aftermidnight, performing at the annual KMWU Aftermidnight Benefit BASH. A local soundman for the BASH concerts was John McBride, who later went on to work with Garth Brooks. Years later, John McBride was impressed enough with the band to bring them to Nashville and record an album at his studio; the resulting recordings are yet to be released.



Eberly performing a solo set in Hutchinson 2020



Eberly performing an Internet solo broadcast set at home in Hutchinson 2020

BILL'S PHANTOM HURTLIED
WILDLY AWAY FROM HIS
MUTILATED FLESH...

KERBLAM!
BLAM!

BAM!
BANG!

HEY NONNY
NONNY!

HEY
NONNY
NO!

BZING!
PING!

BANG!
BRANG!

POW!
ZING!

BANG!
POW!

ANDY DEVINES ELECTRON-
IC PRESENCE ECHOED
THE SENTIMENTS OF ALL
SUICIDAL SIDEKICKS...

HEY WILD BILL!
WAIT FER ME!

BANG!
BANG!

MA DEATH, ALONE WITH
HER MIRRORS, CRADLED
THE FADING IMAGE OF
HICKOK'S MURDER...



108 Schwind



JOHN E. LIVES LIKE A HERMIT IN AN AIRPLANE BUNGALOW IN THE COLLEGE HILL AREA OF WICHITA, KANSAS. HE'S OLD ENOUGH TO BE EMBARRASSED BY THIS LITTLE BOOK AND HE SHOULD BE.

Unreleased alternate cover color variant

